



*In whatever hands this book may
fall, it is the property of 1797*

PLINY'S EPISTLES.

BOOK I.

EPISTLE I.

PLINY to SEPTITIUS.

YOU have frequently entreated me to gather up those letters, which I have writ with most correctness, and to give them to the public. I have obeyed your commands, without paying the least regard to the order of time, they not being designed as a history. I have placed them together as they happened to come to my hands. I hope neither you will repent of your advice, nor I of
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my compliance; the consequence of which will be, that I must enquire for such of my letters as are scattered abroad, and if I write any more hereafter, they shall certainly be published. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

This first epistle, the introductory preface to all the rest, is a demonstration, that PLINY published his letters, not from any vain motion of his own heart, but at the repeated solicitations of SEPTITIUS. *Frequenter hortatus es*, “you have perpetually been pressing me.” It is no wonder, if the rest of PLINY's friends joined in the same request, not so much perhaps with a view to the honour of the person, who wrote the letters, as to the honour of the persons, to whom they were written. There is an irresistible pride in being the favorite of a great and an eminent man. His smiles, like the beams of the sun, ripen and bring forward all, upon whom they shine: like the sun too, they shine upon the good and bad without distinction: for it often happens, that fancy, whim, indolence, or some worse cause, have so great a share, and are so unaccountably prevalent in the choice of friends and companions, that we see brave men insulted by cowards, wise men directed by fools, and honest men guided by knaves. But PLINY was governed neither by passion nor prejudice in the choice of his favorites. He judged with coolness and deliberation. He had obtained a thorough knowledge of the world. He was not only learned in books, but in men; a kind of learning more difficult and more useful even than philosophy.

Quæ adhuc neglectæ jacent requiram. “I must look after such letters as have hitherto been neglected.” This more literal construction may possibly convey the more exact meaning of our author. He alludes perhaps to letters which he had long since thrown aside and neglected, but of which he had retained copies.

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E P I S T L E II.

P L I N Y *to* A R R I A N U S.

SINCE I foresee your return will not be so soon as you proposed, I now send the book, which I promised you in some of my former letters. Use me as you have hitherto done; not only read my work, but correct it. I am more earnest in this request, because none of my works have yet appeared in the same manner and style of writing which I pretend to in this: for I have endeavoured to imitate DEMOSTHENES, who was always your favorite, and CALVUS, who is lately become mine. However my imitations are confined merely to the oratorical figures of their style; for the spirit of such men can only be equalled by those, to whom the Gods have given an equal genius. The subject itself (excuse the arrogance of the expression) favored such a kind of emulation. The whole difficulty lay in a certain vehemence of speech, which was very necessary to rouse a man, if I am to be roused, sunk by long disuse into lethargic indolence. However I did not avoid those gentler flowers of rhetoric, which our countryman TULLY so often makes use of, whenever such ornaments were seasonable, and did not carry me too much out of my way. My aim was to be sharp, not ill-natured.

Imagine not from hence, that I am bespeaking your favor. But thus far I will confess in hopes to provoke your criticisms, that my friends and I, if your approbation attends our partiality, are resolved to submit this piece to the world: for certainly something must be published,

lished, and I could wish it were this work (you hear the wish of laziness) because it is ready: there are several reasons for publishing something, chiefly, as there is a great demand made for my writings, (although they have already lost the charm of novelty,) unless the booksellers say so to flatter me. But if their flattery incites me to a closer pursuit of my studies, let them flatter on. Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

Works intended for the public should like gold be tried in the fire: if the metal is pure, it will come out shining and unhurt; if base, let it perish in the flames. But pride has so universal an ascendant over the minds of most men, and of authors in particular, that they chuse rather to fall a sacrifice to public censure, than to enjoy the advantages of private advice. In conversation a man will expose his thoughts freely to his friends, and cautiously to his foes; but when he commits those thoughts to writing, and from thence to the press, he generally puts friends and enemies upon the same footing, consults neither the one nor the other, but appears at once to them both *with all his imperfections on his head*. This false conduct can only arise from vanity and self-conceit. In conversation a coxcomb may meet with adversaries ready and able to contest with him, but in writing he has the field to himself; no body can enter his closet, no body can stop his pen; he goes on in triumph, and he takes his rank accordingly in the temple of FAME. But the mind of PLINY is clear from these errors of presumption; he is devoid of pride and stiff opinion, he is desirous of instruction and advice, and is blind to his own perfections, he is willing to receive all the assistance of his friends, especially of ARRIANUS, whose criticisms had probably been of benefit to him before. *Hunc rogo ex consuetudine tuâ, et legas et emendes*, "treat me with your usual friendship, read my work, and correct it."

The work, that PLINY hints at here, was an oration, which he was pressed to publish, in defence of ACCIA VARIOLA, a lady of great quality, of whom he speaks in the 33d epistle of the sixth book. But he was diffident of this particular performance, because

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it was a new attempt. It was written in imitation of DEMOSTHENES, whose style and manner was full of fire and force. QUINTILIAN calls that celebrated Grecian, *longè princeps oratorum*: and he bears that character to this day.

SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS points out very justly the different characters of CICERO and DEMOSTHENES, where he says, *irascitur ut DEMOSTHENES, persuadet ut TULLIUS*. The one drives rapidly, the other leads gently. The one bursts out like a torrent, in sound and vehemence; the other glides swiftly along like a beautiful stream, always clear and full, always strong and gentle. PLINY therefore shews a remarkable niceness of judgment to mix the polished dialect of CICERO with the rougher energy of DEMOSTHENES, and like a skilful architect makes his building at once both of ornament and use.

CALVUS was an orator of the same turn and disposition with DEMOSTHENES; but TULLY is of opinion that he wanted force; for speaking of him in a letter to TREBONIUS, he says, *multæ erant et reconditæ literæ, vis non erat*; but adds immediately after, *de judicio ejus valde existimavi benè*. It is impossible not to be curious after any man, whom PLINY honoured with his imitation; but time has cruelly swallowed up the orations of PLINY himself, the panegyric on TRAJAN excepted, and has devoured those of CALVUS likewise. All we can know of him is from those places, where he is now and then mentioned by different authors. AULUS GELLIUS, OVID, PROPERTIUS, and HORACE speak of him as a poet; but we must here view him in the light of an orator; and we shall find him often mentioned as such by TULLY, SENECA, and QUINTILIAN: the latter of whom speaks of his eloquence thus. *Est et sancta et gravis oratio, et castigata, et frequenter vehemens quoque. Imitator est autem Atticorum, fecitque illi properata mors injuriam, si quid adjecturus, non si quid detractus fuit*. In the *dialogus de oratoribus* vulgarly attributed to TACITUS, but generally thought to be QUINTILIAN's, he is likewise spoken of, but not with so high a degree of reputation. Upon the whole CALVUS scarce appears in the first class of orators, but may rather be compared, as LONGINUS says of HYPERIDES, to a champion, who, though not chief in each of the five sorts of exercises singly, yet exceeded the common rate of wrestlers in them all together. Acres

Dele. i.

Acres enim esse non tristes volebamus. "I would be sharp, not ill-natured:" or in the words of HAMLET, "let me speak daggers, but use none." Good nature, the characteristic of PLINY, may be seen in this sentence much to his honour. He was engaged in a cause, where the strongest invectives might not only have been justified, but were almost necessary. A lady of high rank, both by birth and marriage, had been cheated of her fortune by an old doating father, who at fourscore tottered into the bands of matrimony, to the damage and disinheritorship of his only child. PLINY undertook her cause: it was heard in the courts of the *centumviri*, where he conquered in the most triumphant manner; but in his conquest shewed mercy, and in his triumph avoided cruelty. He was *acer*, but not *tristis*, and scorned to buy the greatest applause, by the least malevolence: he lashed the youthful inamorato, but spared the grey-headed father; remembering, that he was advocate for a daughter, whose filial piety, at the same time that it hindered her not from justice, debarred her from revenge.

Whatever else might be said on this occasion will come more properly under the 33d epistle of the sixth book.

EPISTLE III.

PLINY to CANINIUS RUFUS.

TELL me what are you doing at Comum? Comum equally the object of our delight! Tell me some news of that enchanting villa; of that gallery, where it is always spring; of those plane trees spreading themselves,

"^a Shade above shade a wooden theatre;"

of the green enameled banks of your canal; of your lake situated for pleasure and for use; of your riding-house,

"Smooth as a lawn and solid as a down:"

^a MILTON.

of

of your bath open to the sun on every side; of your various dining rooms, suited to a larger or lesser company; of your bed-chambers made for repose both by day and night. Say, are you wholly engaged by these beauties, and do they share you by turns? or are you called from them as usual by frequent excursions to your family affairs? If these beauties entirely possess you, then is your happiness complete: but if not, then are you one of many in the same miserable situation. Come, my friend,—it is high time—leave low and sordid cares to others; and apply your mind entirely to your studies in the deep recesses of such an undisturbed retreat: let this be your business and your recreation; your labour and your rest; the object of your waking thoughts and of your dreams. Plan out and compose some work, that may ever belong to you: for your other possessions will frequently change masters, but this will be always your own. I know the soul I exhort, I know the genius I speak to.—Let me see you endeavour to appear as great in your own eye, as you certainly will in the eye of others, when once you become conscious of your own abilities. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

Whoever has a desire to learn the art of praising without insincerity, of obliging without meanness, and of delighting the passions, without flattering the vices, will find that art in this letter. Our author insinuates himself into his friend, by touching elegantly upon every particular beauty belonging to the country seat of RUFUS. He begins his letter with a set of questions, that are so many pictures of the place. They are drawn in miniature, and shew exquisite skill in the painter: the invention is nice, the expression delicate, and the colouring agreeable to the whole. The observations that are made in consequence of such originals, may be looked upon as frames, which are intended as ornamental additions to pieces of infinite more value than the frames themselves.

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In the territories of Comum lived CANINIUS, and in the city of Comum PLINY was born; and though it is scarce possible not to have a partiality for our birth place, be it where it will, yet PLINY shews his passion for Comum to arise only from the beauty of the situation, the temperature of the air, and the various and elegant improvements made there by CANINIUS. He calls it *suburbanum amœnissimum*, "a villa filled with charms:" nor can imagination form a more delightful place, than the open gallery, which he speaks of, *verna semper*, "where it was perpetual spring." It puts us in mind of OVID's poetical description of the golden age;

*Ver erat æternum, placidique tepentibus auris
Mulcebant zephiri natos sine semine flores*^b.

The next enquiry he makes is after a shady grove of plane trees: *Quid Πλατανῶν opacissimus?* The plane tree was in high esteem amongst the ancients, as we may learn from Mr. EVELYN, whose stile is particular, but whose account is curious.

"Platanus (says he) that so beautiful and precious tree, so doated on by XERXES, that ÆLIAN and other authors tell us, *he made halt*, and stopt his prodigious army of seventeen hundred thousand soldiers, which even covered the sea, exhausted rivers, and thrust mount Athos from the continent, to admire the *pulcritude* and *procerity* of one of these goodly trees, and became so fond of it, that *spoiling both himself, his concubines, and great persons*, of all their jewels, he covered it with gold, gemms, necklaces, scarfs, and bracelets, and infinite riches: *in sum* was so enamoured of it, that for some days, neither the concernment of his grand expedition, nor interest of honour, nor the necessary motion of his portentous army could persuade him from it. He stiled it his minion, his mistress, his goddess: and when he was forced to part from it, he caused the figure of it to be stamped in a medal of gold, which he continually wore about him. Wherever *they* built their sumptuous and magnificent colleges for the exercises of youth in *gymnastics*, as riding, shooting, wrestling, running, &c. (like our French aca-

^b Ovidii Metamorph. Lib. 1.

demies)

demies) and where the graver philosophers also met to converse together and improve their studies, betwixt the *xyſta* and *ſubdiales ambulationes* (which were porticos open to the air,) they planted groves and walks of platans to refresh, and ſhade the *paleſtritaë*, as you have them deſcribed by VITRUVIUS, lib. 5. cap. 11. and as CLAUDIUS PERRAULT has aſſiſted the text with a figure or *ichnographical plot*. Theſe trees the Romans firſt brought out of *the Levant*, and cultivated with ſo much induſtry and coſt, for their ſtately and proud head only, that great orators, and ſtateſmen, CICERO and HORTENSIUS, would exchange now and then a turn at the bar, that they might have the pleaſure to ſtep to their villas and refresh their *platans*, which they would often *irrigate* with wine, inſtead of water, and ſo prized the very ſhadow of it, that when afterwards they tranſplanted them to *France*, they exacted a tribute of any of the natives, who ſhould preſume but to put his head under it. PLINY tells us, there is no tree whatſoever, which ſo well defends us from the heat of ſummer, nor that admits it more kindly in winter; and for our encouragement, I do upon experience aſſure you, that they will flouriſh and abide, without any more trouble, than frequent and plentiful watering, which from their youth they exceſſively delight in, and gratefully acknowledge by their growth accordingly."

Quid Euripus viridis et gemmeus? "The green enamelled banks "of your canal."—The *Euripi* were open aqueducts, which could be filled or emptied at pleaſure. They derived their name from a narrow ſea between *Eubæa* and *Bæotia*, that ebbs and flows ſeven times in four and twenty hours. They were made with great art, and when they were not filled with water, the bottom appeared green, and the banks adorned with flowers. The *Circus* at *Rome*, where the ſea-fights were repreſented, was ſupplied in the ſame manner by canals called *Euripi*. When the *Naumachiæ* were exhibited, the *Circus* was filled with water from the *Euripi*, which latter then remained dry; but when the naval ſports were ended, the water was turned back again into the *Euripi*, and the bottom of the *Circus* remained dry. But the expreſſion *viridis et gemmeus* may poſſibly bear another ſignification. The *gemmeus* might be owing to the refraction of the rays of light through the transparent ſtream, which made it appear like a diamond with a clear water; and the bottom of it was the foil: if ſo,

this could happen only when it was full, and in a proper motion, which diversified and scattered the rays more.

The philosophy of it stands thus—The rays of light, passing through any medium, are refracted according to the density and transparency of it; on which account all pellucid gems have a lustre in proportion to their density. For this reason the rays of light reflected from a solid surface, and refracted through the water, will give a lustre like a gem, and are collected, when the basin is full into a brighter focus, than they can be from reflexion only, when the basin is empty, in the different proportion, which water bears to air, which is as eight hundred and fifty, to one.

Quid subjectus et serviens lacus? “Your lake situated for pleasure “and for use.”—We may judge from this question, that the lake was at some distance from the house, far enough to afford an agreeable prospect, and near enough to serve all the uses of the family. The *Euripus* probably fell into it, and the grove of *Platans* surrounded the borders: so that if we take the whole together, it seems to answer the place, to which Mr. DRYDEN conducts his fool of nature,

Where in a plain defended by a wood
Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,
By which an alabaster fountain stood.

Quid illa mollis et tamen solida gestatio? “Your riding place, the “ground of which is so soft and yet so firm.” The Romans were fond of exercise, and were sensible, how conducive it was to health: every gentleman took care to have at his country seat a covered place, or house, in which he could either ride on horseback, or be carried in his chariot, whenever the extremity of weather put a stop to all exercise abroad. This was called *gestatio*, and had so far a resemblance to the riding houses of these days, that it was built up, and closed on both sides, to keep out the sun in summer, and the rain in winter.

An, ut solebas, intentione rei familiaris obeundæ, crebris excursionibus avocaris. PLINY is very apprehensive, that the private affairs of CANINIUS, of whose genius and capacity he has the highest opinion, may divert him from the enjoyment of his studies: he therefore advises his friend to quit all business; and to set about some work of immortality.

mortality. Which reminds us of what HORACE says upon this head to JULIUS FLORUS;

— — — — — *Non tibi parvum
Ingenium, non incultum est, nec turpiter hirtum,
Seu linguam causis acuis, seu civica jura
Respondere paras, seu condis amabile carmen,
Prima feres ederae victricis præmia. Quod si
Frigida curarum fomenta relinquere possis,
Quo te cælestis sapientia duceret, ires.
Hoc opus, hoc studium parvi properemus et ampli,
Si patriæ volumus, si nobis vivere cari.*

PLINY had certainly his eye to this passage in *Horace*, when he writ to CANINIUS; or at least we may assure ourselves, that where these two authors agree in one and the same thought, it must be excellent, and like true gold, perfectly sterling, whatever image be stamped upon it.

Reliqua rerum tuarum post te alium atque alium dominum sortientur: —says PLINY. *Erit nulli proprius, sed cedit in usum, nunc mihi, nunc alii,* —says HORACE. The last compliment in this letter crowns the whole: but I am afraid that the natural disposition of CANINIUS RUFUS tended towards avarice: otherwise a man, who had so enchanting a retreat, and such power of employing his time in studious entertainments, would scarce have suffered domestic avocations to have broke in upon learned ease. In honour of PLINY, we will only suppose CANINIUS too careful, and not absolutely avaritious, or, as may be deduced from this epistle, a person, whose abilities were equal to the greatest things, but whose inclinations were subservient to the least.

E P I S T L E IV.

PLINY to POMPEIA CELERINA, *his mother in law.*

FROM amongst all my letters, (for I need not now refer to any of yours) I fix upon my last, though
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it is short and of an old date, to convince you, how much I am captivated with the vast affluence of beauties in your several country houses at *Ocriculum*, *Narnium*, *Carfulanum*, and at your favorite *Perusinum*; but particularly at *Narnium*, where you have a bath.

I have the happiness to find, that what I look upon as my own, is not so much mine, as what is really yours. The only difference is, that your servants are more careful of me, and are more busy about me, than my own. The same thing may happen to you, if you will come so far out of your road, as to honour us with a visit. It is a journey I wish I could induce you to; first, that you may enjoy what is ours, as fully as we have enjoyed what is yours; and next that my servants, who wait upon me with an indolence, that almost amounts to neglect, may upon your arrival exert themselves as they ought. Believe me, indulgence to domesticks gives them a habit of laying aside all respect towards their masters. New objects invite them to their duty, and they chuse to recommend themselves rather by their diligence to others, than their attendance upon us. Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

No picture can give greater delight to the mind, than one, where domestick happiness is drawn in full beauty; where friendship, cheerfulness, and all the social virtues appear in their just attitude; where plenty and œconomy are joined hand in hand; and where generosity sits smiling at her own gifts. Such a picture is this epistle; it is written to POMPEIA CELERINA, the mother of PLINY's first wife. CELERINA had carried him to her several country houses, where she had entertained him in the most polite manner; in a manner suitable to his own taste and disposition. He found himself more at ease with her than at his own house: her servants attended him, her baths refreshed him, her daughter was the object of his love; and to
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form a just idea of CELERINA herself, we need only remember, that she had chosen PLINY for her son in law, and when he was so, knew how to entertain him.—Let us now take a view of her different country houses.

Ocriculum was a town in the *Appennine* lying upon the *Flaminian* way, just below the place, where the *Nar* falls into the *Tiber*. The territory about it was called *Ocriculanium*, in the same manner, as our shires take their names generally from the chief city in the county; and the inhabitants at this day are called *Otricoli*.—Mr. ADDISON in his Travels speaks of a ruined castle in this place, which might possibly have been the country seat of CELERINA.

In that neighbourhood, at about twelve miles distance, stood *Narnium*, the original name of which was *Neruinum*. It was besieged by the Romans under the consulship of APULEIUS; and ^c LIVY says, it was so situated amidst rocks and inaccessible mountains, that had not the city been betrayed by two of her own citizens, neither force nor stratagem could have taken it. The Romans gave it the name of *Narnium* from the river *Narnia* (now called *le Negra*, or the *Nar*) which runs at the foot of these mountains. This must have been a very fine situation, and perhaps not unlike that of *Windsor-Castle*, where from a great height we command a most extensive view, and at the bottom flows one of the finest rivers in the world.

Carfulanum lies in the direct road from *Narnium* to *Perusinum*. The town itself is now quite destroyed, and only a small inn remains upon the spot, which in remembrance of the city is called *Carfula*.

The modern Italian name of *Perusinum* is *Perugia*: at this place LUCIUS, the brother of MARK ANTONY, was reduced to great extremity, when he fled from OCTAVIUS CAESAR, as we learn from FLORUS:

^d *Hunc vero [ANTONII fratrem] jam non privatis, sed totis senatus suffragiis judicatum hostem CAESAR aggressus, intra Perusiæ muros redegit, compulitque ad extrema deditiois, turpi et nihil non expertâ fame.*

Our author discovers throughout this epistle that sweetness of nature, which rendered him so amiable to the age he lived in, and made

^c Liv. Lib. x. cap. ix & x.

^d L. Flori. Lib. 4. cap. v.

his character so shining to succeeding times. It is very certain, the good-natured master is often less carefully attended, although much better beloved, than the ill-natured tyrant; mildness and indulgence to servants seldom meeting with those returns of duty and gratitude, which might be expected. But PLINY could generously lay aside the expectation of receiving any acknowledgment, for the inward satisfaction of having deserved it.

EPISTLE V.

PLINY to VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

DID you ever see a more dastardly or mean spirited wretch than MARCUS REGULUS, since the death of DOMITIAN? during whose reign his enormities were not less than under NERO's, but they were acted more covertly. He began to be afraid, that I was angry with him; nor did he judge wrong, for I really was angry. He was not only principally concerned in the destruction of RUSTICUS ARULENUS, but he had insulted him after death, by repeating and publishing a certain book, in which he railed against RUSTICUS, and called him the *ape of the Stoicks*: and further added, that he was branded with the *Vitellian scar*.—You are well acquainted with the eloquence of REGULUS. He was one day roaring so intemperately against HERENNIUS SENECIO, that even METIUS CARUS said to him, *Pray what have you to do with my dead men? Do I meddle with CRASSUS or CAMERINUS?* both whom REGULUS had accused in NERO's reign.—REGULUS imagined, that I took these things ill; and therefore when he rehearsed his book, I was not invited.—Besides, he remembered what a mortal thrust he aimed at me before the *centumviri*. At the request of ARULENUS RUSTICUS,

RUSTICUS, I was engaged there, in the cause of TIMON's wife ARIONILLA. REGULUS was on the other side. In one part of the cause we, on our side, relied upon a particular judgment given by METIUS MODESTUS, a man of infinite worth, but who at that time was sent into exile by DOMITIAN.—Here you will see REGULUS.—PLINY, says he, *I desire to know your real opinion of MODESTUS?* You perceive my danger, if I had answered, I thought him innocent, and my shame, if I had answered otherwise. I verily think I may say the Gods inspired me upon the occasion. I replied, *I will give you my opinion, if his case is now to come in judgment before the centumviri.* —*Well*—rejoined he—*but pray tell us, what are your real sentiments of MODESTUS?* It is usual, answered I, *to examine witnesses only against the accused, and not against the condemned.* He then begun a third time, *Come I quit all other questions about MODESTUS; but tell us your opinion of his loyalty?* You ask me, said I, *my opinion, but I cannot think it so much as lawful to ask the question, where the person is already condemned.* Here he held his peace; and I was praised and congratulated for neither hurting my character, by what might have been an advantageous, but an unjust, answer, nor falling into the snare of so insidious a question. —Struck in his conscience with his behaviour towards me, he first applies himself to CAECILIUS CELER, and afterwards to FABIUS JUSTUS, that they might reconcile me to him. Nor content with that, he comes to SPURINNA; *I beseech you*, says he in the humblest manner (for when he is frightened, he appears the most abject creature imaginable) *to go early to PLINY's house; but go as early as possible, for I am no longer able to bear this uneasiness; and by any means contrive, that he be no longer angry with me.*

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I was early awake: in the morning arrives a messenger from SPURINNA, to tell me, SPURINNA was just coming to me: *No, says I, I will wait upon him.* We both met in LIVIA's porch, as we were going to each other. He delivered the message sent by REGULUS, and added his own entreaties to induce me to forgive him, which was acting a part of the highest good-nature to the worst natured man alive. *You yourself shall judge,* replied I, *what my present situation allows me to say to REGULUS: towards you it is fit I should have no reserve: but I expect MAURICUS, (for MAURICUS was not yet returned from banishment) and therefore cannot give a positive answer, either as to my consent, or refusal, being determined to act as he shall direct, for in this affair it becomes him to lead the way, and me to accompany him.*

Not many days after, REGULUS met me in the prætor's office, and there, after pursuing me some time, he begged one word in private. He began by saying, that he was afraid I had retained some inward disgust towards him, from what he had let drop once in the court of the *centumviri*, when he was engaged in a cause against SATRIUS RUFUS and me: his words were, " SATRIUS and a
 " certain person, who vies with CICERO, and who scorns
 " the eloquence of the present age." I told him, that I now found he had said a thing maliciously, according to his own confession, which I might otherwise have construed as a compliment; *for,* added I, *it is true, and I own it, that I emulate CICERO; and it is as true, that I cannot relish the eloquence of the present age: I hold it the height of folly not to copy after the best originals. But since you can remember so well what passed in that cause, pray why do you forget another, in which you asked me, what my opinion was of the loyalty of MODESTUS? Pale*
 as

have them described by VITRUVIUS, lib. 5. cap. 11. and as CLAUDIUS PERRAULT has assisted the text with a figure or *ichnographical plot*. These trees the Romans first brought out of *the Levant*, and cultivated with so much industry and cost, for ~~in~~ ^{their} stately and proud head only, that great orators, and statesmen, CICERO and HORTENSIUS, would exchange now and then a turn at the bar, that they might have the pleasure to step to their villas and refresh their *platans*, which they would often *irrigate* with wine, instead of water, and so prized the very shadow of it, that when afterwards they transplanted them to *France*, they exacted a tribute of any of the natives, who should presume but to put his head under it. PLINY tells us, there is no tree whatsoever, which so well defends us from the heat of summer, nor that admits it more kindly in winter; and for our encouragement, I do upon experience assure you, that they will flourish and abide, without any more trouble, than frequent and plentiful watering, which from their youth they excessively delight in, and gratefully acknowledge by their growth accordingly."

Quid Euripus viridis et gemmeus? "The green enamelled banks of your canal,"—or more properly, "The green enamelled bottom of your aqueduct." The *Euripi* were open aqueducts, which could be filled or emptied at pleasure. They derived their name from a narrow sea between *Eubæa* and *Bæotia*, that ebbs and flows seven times in four and twenty hours. They were made with great art, and when they were not filled with water, the bottom appeared *viridis et gemmeus*. The *Circus* at Rome, where the sea-fights were represented, was supplied in the same manner by canals called *Euripi*. When the *Naumachiæ* were exhibited, the *Circus* was filled with water from the *Euripi*, which latter then remained dry; but when the naval sports were ended, the water was turned back again into the *Euripi*, and the bottom of the *Circus* remained dry. But the expression *viridis et gemmeus* may possibly bear another signification. The *gemmeus* might be owing to the refraction of the rays of light through the transparent stream, which made it appear like a diamond with a clear water; and the bottom of it was the foil: if so, this could happen only when it was full, and in a proper motion, which diversified and scattered the rays more. In either case *viridis* refers to the banks as well as to the bottom.

~~quodammodo~~

C

The



they can be. The philosophy of it stands thus—The rays of light, passing through any medium, are refracted according to the density and transparency of it; on which account all pellucid gems have a lustre in proportion to their density. For this reason the rays of light reflected from a solid surface, and refracted through the water, will give a lustre like a gem, and are collected, when the basin is full into a brighter focus, than from reflexion only when empty, in the different proportion, which water bears to air, which is as eight hundred and fifty, to one. *the basin*

Quid subiectus et serviens lacus? “Your lake situated for pleasure “and for use.”—We may judge from this question, that the lake was at some distance from the house, far enough to afford an agreeable prospect, and near enough to serve all the uses of the family. The *Euripus* probably fell into it, and the grove of *Platans* surrounded the borders: so that if we take the whole together, it seems to answer the place, to which Mr. DRYDEN conducts his fool of nature,

Where in a plain defended by a wood
Crept through the matted grass a crystal flood,
By which an alabaster fountain stood.

Quid illa mollis et tamen solida gestatio? The Romans were fond of exercise, and were sensible, how conducive it was to health: every gentleman took care to have at his country seat a covered place, or house, in which he could either ride on horseback, or be carried in his chariot, whenever the extremity of weather put a stop to all exercise abroad. This was called *gestatio*, and had so far a resemblance to the riding houses of these days, that it was built up, and closed on both sides, to keep out the sun in summer, and the rain in winter. Another sort was covered on the top, and had hedge-rows instead of side walls: of this kind was the *gestatio* mentioned here by PLINY, which seems particularly contrived against the violent heats of the sun, by having hedges instead of walls, so that the air passed freely, and gave an agreeable coolness to the space within. The hedges were close, and appeared *solid*, yet were in reality *soft* and pliable.

11 solid soft not in habits X PLINY is apprehensive, that the private affairs of CANINIUS, of whose genius and capacity he has the highest opinion, will tear him from the enjoyment of his ~~fastidious~~ studies, ~~that~~ he advises him to quit them. *may be*

x An. ut volebas, in lectione rei familiaris abunde,
crebris excursionibus avocaris. — this is to precede, as a quotation, he
marked x Pliny is very &c.

his friend to wait ^{business} **B O O K I.**

11

~~them all~~, and to set about some work of immortality. Which reminds us of what HORACE says upon this head to ~~his friend~~ JULIUS FLORUS;

————— *Non tibi parvum
Ingenium, non incultum est, nec turpiter hirtum,
Seu linguam causis acuis, seu civica jura
Respondere paras, seu condis amabile carmen,
Prima feres ederæ victricis præmia. Quod si
Frigida curarum fomenta relinquere possis,
Quo te cælestis sapientia duceret, ires.
Hoc opus, hoc studium parvi properemus et ampli
Si patriæ volumus, si nobis vivere cari.*

PLINY had certainly his eye to this passage in *Horace*, when he writ to CANINIUS; or at least we may assure ourselves, that where these two authors agree in one and the same thought, it must be excellent, and like true gold, perfectly sterling, whatever image be stamped upon it.

same as gold, and sterling.

Reliqua rerum tuarum post te alium atque alium dominum sortientur: —says PLINY. *Erit nulli proprius, sed cedit in usum, nunc mihi, nunc alii,* —says HORACE. The last compliment in this letter crowns the whole: but I am afraid that the natural disposition of CANINIUS RUFUS tended towards avarice: otherwise a man, who had so enchanting a retreat, and such power of employing his time in studious entertainments, would scarce have suffered domestic avocations to have broke in upon learned ease. In honour of PLINY, we will only suppose him too careful, and not absolutely avaritious, or, as may be deduced from this epistle, a person, whose abilities were equal to the greatest things, but whose inclinations were subservient to the least.

EPISTLE IV.

PLINY to POMPEIA CELERINA, *his mother in law.*

FROM amongst all my letters, (for I need not now refer to any of yours) I fix upon my last, though

it is short and of an old date, to convince you, how much I am captivated with the vast affluence of beauties in your several country houses at *Ocriculum*, *Narnium*, *Carfulanum*, and at your favorite *Perusinum*; but particularly at *Narnium*, where you have a bath.

I have the happiness to find, that what I look upon as my own, is not so much mine, as what is really yours. The only difference is, that your servants are more careful of me, and are more busy about me, than my own. The same thing may happen to you, if you will come so far out of your road, as to honour us with a visit. It is a journey I wish I could induce you to; first, that you may enjoy what is ours, as fully as we have enjoyed what is yours; and next that my servants, who wait upon me with an indolence, that almost amounts to neglect, may upon your coming exert themselves as they ought. Believe me, indulgence to domesticks gives them a habit of laying aside all respect towards their masters. New objects invite them to their duty, and they chuse to recommend themselves rather by their diligence to others, than their attendance upon us. Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

No picture can give greater delight to the mind, than one, where domestick happiness is drawn in full beauty; where friendship, cheerfulness, and all the social virtues appear in their just attitude; where plenty and œconomy are joined hand in hand; and where generosity sits smiling at her own gifts.

~~Good sense and good nature ought to be the two principal figures in the piece. The gods and the muses should not be absent, and laughing Cupid should mingle in the throng.~~

Such a picture is this epistle; it is written to POMPEIA CELERINA, the mother of PLINY'S wife. CELERINA had carried him to her several country houses, where she had entertained him in the most polite manner; in a manner suitable to his own taste and disposition. He found

arrival

the first

first

found himself more at ease with her than at his own house: her servants attended him, her baths refreshed him, her daughter was the object of his love; and to form a just idea of CELERINA herself, we need only remember, that she had chosen PLINY for her son in law, and when he was so, knew how to entertain him.—Let us now take a view of her different country houses.

Ocriculum was a town in the *Appennine* lying upon the *Flaminian* way, just below the place, where the *Nar* falls into the *Tiber*. The territory about it was called *Ocricululum*, in the same manner, as our shires take their names generally from the chief city in the county; and the inhabitants at this day are called *Otricoli*.—M. ADDISON speaks of a ruin'd castle in this place, which might probably have been the country seat of CELERINA.

In that neighbourhood, at about twelve miles distance, stood *Narnium*, the original name of which was *Neruinum*. It was besieged by the Romans under the consulship of APULEIUS; and^d LIVY says, it was so situated amidst rocks and inaccessible mountains, that had not the city been betrayed by two of her own citizens, neither force nor stratagem could have taken it. The Romans gave it the name of *Narnium* from the river *Narnia* (now called *le Negra*, or the *Nar*) which runs at the foot of these mountains. This must have been a very fine situation, and perhaps not unlike that of *Windsor-Castle*, where from a great height you command a most extensive view, and at the bottom flows one of the finest rivers in the world.

* *Carfulanum* lies in the direct road from *Narnium* to *Perusinum*. Some of the learned commentators, whose profound gravity entitles them to weight with all true lovers of the alphabet, have excluded the first U in *Carfulanum*, and have established E O in the stead. We may read boldly therefore, *Carseolanum*, and at the same time recollect these two lines in OVID;

* *Frigida Carseoli, nec olivis apta ferendis
Terra, sed ad segetes ingeniosus ager.*

As this country abounded in corn, it is probable, that POMPEIA had her farm there, and from thence supplied her other country houses

^c Liv. Lib. x. cap. ix and x.

^d Ovidii Fast. Lib. 4. ver. 683.

with

+ Halick

in his travels
the pursuance of an
idle quest
possibly.

* + Halick.

— we

with provisions. But the town itself is now quite destroyed, and only a small inn remains upon the spot, which in remembrance of the city is called *Carfula*.

The modern Italian name of *Perusinum* is *Perugia*: Nothing remarkable can be said of it, unless we take notice of the misery, to which LUCIUS, the brother of MARK ANTONY, was reduced there, when he fled from OCTAVIUS CAESAR. The words of FLORUS are these:

Hunc vero [ANTONII fratrem] jam non privatis, sed totis senatus suffragiis judicatum hostem CAESAR aggressus, intra Perusiæ muros redegit, compulitque ad extrema deditiois, turpi et nihil non expertâ fame.

As PLINY makes use of the expression, *in tuo Perusino*, we may conclude that this was POMPEIA's favorite seat. Elegance and art shone in every one of her houses, but here in particular. How much are we to regret the havock and destruction, which time has made!

Of the first paradise there's nothing found,
Plants set by heaven are vanish'd.

Our author discovers in this letter that sweetness of nature, which rendered him so amiable to the age he lived in, and made his character so shining to succeeding times. It is very certain, the good-natured master is often ~~worse served~~, although ~~better~~ beloved, than the ill-natured tyrant; mildness and indulgence to servants seldom meeting with those returns of duty and gratitude, which might be expected. ~~In this therefore the merit of PLINY shines extremely bright, because he could calmly lay aside the expectation of receiving any acknowledgment, for the inward satisfaction of having deserved it.~~

EPISTLE V.

PLINY to VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

DID you ever see a more dastardly or a more dejected wretch than MARCUS REGULUS, since the death of DOMITIAN? during whose reign his enormities were

Luc. Flori. Lib. 4. cap. v.

WALLER.

not

The word takes more
closely printed.

less carefully attended
much better

generously

Sept

not less than under NERO's, but they were acted more ~~co-~~
~~vertly~~. He began to be afraid, that I was angry with him;
 nor did he judge wrong, for I really was angry. He was
 not only principally concerned in the destruction of RUS-
 TICUS ARULENUS, but he had insulted him after death,
 by repeating and publishing a certain book, in which he
 railed against RUSTICUS, and called him the *ape of the*
Vitellian scar.—You are well acquainted with the elo-
 quence of REGULUS. He was one day roaring so intem-
 perately against HERENNIUS SENECIO, that even METIUS
 CARUS said to him, *Pray what have you to do with my*
dead men? Do I meddle with CRASSUS or CAMERINUS?
 both whom REGULUS had accused in NERO's days.—RE-
 GULUS imagined, that I took these things ill, and there-
 fore when he rehearsed his book, I was not invited.—Be-
 sides, he remembered what a mortal thrust he aimed at
 me before the *centumvirs*. At the request of ARULENUS
 RUSTICUS, I was engaged there, in the cause of TIMON's
 wife ARIONILLA. REGULUS was on the other side. In
 one part of the cause we, on our side, relied upon a par-
 ticular judgment given by METIUS MODESTUS, a man
 of infinite worth. but who at that time was sent into exile
 by DOMITIAN.—Here you will see REGULUS.—PLINY,
 says he, *I desire to know your real opinion of MODESTUS?*
 You perceive my danger, if I answered, I thought him in-
 nocent, and my shame, if I answered otherwise. I verily
 think I may say the Gods inspired me upon the occasion.
 I will give you my opinion, ~~answered I~~ if his case is now
 to come in judgment before the *centumvirs*.—Well—re-
 joined he—but pray tell us, what are your real sentiments
 of MODESTUS?—It is usual, answered I, to examine wit-
 nesses only against the accused, and not against the con-
 demned.

covertly, not in italics.

Reign

+ Italick.

had.

had

Italick.

Italick.

Italick.

Italick.

Italick.

I replied,

demned. He then begun a third time, "Come I quit all
 "other questions about MODESTUS; but tell us your opi-
 "nion of his loyalty?" "You ask me, said I, my opi-
 "nion, but I cannot think it so much as lawful to ask
 "the question, where the person is already condemned."
 Here he held his peace; and I was praised and congratulated for neither hurting my character, by what might have been an advantageous but an unjust answer, nor falling into the snare of so insidious a question.—Struck in his conscience with his behaviour towards me, he first applies himself to CAECILIUS CELER, and afterwards to FABIVS JUSTUS, that they might reconcile me to him. Not content with that, he comes to SPURINNA; "I beseech you," says he, in the humblest manner (for when he is frightened, he ~~is~~ the most abject creature imaginable) to go early to PLINY'S house, but go as early as possible, for I am no longer able to bear this uneasiness, and by any means contrive, that he be no longer angry with me." I was early awake: in the morning arrives a messenger from SPURINNA, to say, SPURINNA was just coming to me: No, says I, I will wait upon him. We both met in LIVIA'S porch, as we were going to each other. He delivered the message sent by REGULUS, and added his own entreaties to induce me to forgive him, ^{WALLER} ~~This~~ was acting ^{a part} with the highest good-nature towards the worst natured man alive. You yourself shall judge, replied I, what my present situation allows me to say to REGULUS: towards you it is fit I should have no reserve: but I expect MAURICUS (for MAURICUS was not yet returned from banishment) and therefore cannot give a positive answer, either as to my reconciliation with REGULUS, or my obedience to your commands, being determined to act as he shall direct, for in this affair it is ~~his part~~ to lead the way, and mine to accompany him.

Not

Plinius
 without the
 common.

n. comme a l'hor [sawho]
 X appears

Plinius
 without the

Plinius

11
 where

2nd
 Line
 29
 Henry
 how

+ it becomes him
 me

as he is by nature, he now grew ten times paler, and with a faltering voice replied, *The question I asked, was not aimed at you, but at MODESTUS.* Observe the cruel temper of the man, who frankly owned, that he had endeavoured to wound a person already in banishment. His reason for it was extraordinary; he said, that in a letter, which was read to DOMITIAN, MODESTUS had made use of this expression; "REGULUS is the greatest brute, that walks upon two legs:" it is true MODESTUS had writ these very words. Here I think our discourse ended; nor indeed had I a mind to continue it any longer, that I might keep myself quite free from all engagements, till MAURICUS came from banishment.

You must not imagine from hence, that I am ignorant, how difficult it is to overturn REGULUS. He is rich and powerful; he is respected by many; he is feared by more, and fear is generally stronger than love. Nevertheless it is possible, that such a strong building may be reduced to the ground. For the kindness of bad men is uncertain, like themselves.

But to repeat what I said before, I stay for MAURICUS: He is a man of weight, of prudence, and knowledge of the world; one, who, by past experience, can measure future events: Under his authority, let me do what I will, either in carrying on my resentment, or burying it in oblivion, I am sure to have reason on my side. I have writ these things to you, because, from the mutual friendship between us, it is proper you should not only know my words and actions, but also all my designs. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

This epistle to VOCONIUS ROMANUS, (whose character we shall see fully drawn by PLINY himself hereafter) seems to have been writ-

ten at the beginning of TRAJAN's reign; at a time, when PLINY was rising into favor, and had not yet arrived at the meridian of his power: otherwise he could scarce have found the least difficulty in overturning REGULUS; although he appears, by this letter, to have been one of the many worthless sons of fortune, who wallow in riches, and abound with the outward appearance of followers and friends. another reason gives room for this conjecture; MAURICUS had been banished by DOMITIAN, and was not yet returned, although recalled by NERVA.—MAURICUS was brother to RUSTICUS ARULENUS, who was put to death in the reign of DOMITIAN, and the panegyric, which he had writ in honour and defence of PAETUS THRASEA, was ordered to be burnt. MARCUS REGULUS had an insuperable aversion to RUSTICUS (that aversion, which villains constantly retain against honest men) and was the secret instrument of his destruction; but having drawn so much popular odium upon himself in the time of NERO, by his barefaced and cruel prosecution of CRASSUS and ORPHITUS, he was now resolved to proceed with more caution and hypocrisy, and, like an experienced statesman, to deal forth his slaughter from behind the screen. Sacred CAESAR therefore was the butcher, and REGULUS only provided a knife for the execution. CAESAR could do no wrong, therefore REGULUS was safe: CAESAR * * * * but let us hasten to the account, which TACITUS gives of this Arulenian tragedy.

Legimus, cum ARULENO RUSTICO PAETUS THRASEA, HERENNIO SENECONI PRISCUS HELVIDIUS laudati essent, capitale fuisse: neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum sævitum, delegato triumviris ministerio, ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur. Scilicet illo igne vocem populi Romani et libertatem senatûs, et conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsi insuper sapientiæ professoribus, atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret. Dedimus profectò grande patientiæ documentum; et sicut vetus ætas vidit, quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in servitute, adempto per inquisitiones et loquendi audiendique commercio. Memoriam quoque ipsam cum voce perdidissemus, si tam in nostrâ potestate esset oblivisci, quam tacere.

† Corn. Tacit. vita Agricolaë.

“ Our

“ Our history says, that ARULENUS RUSTICUS and HERENNIUS
 “ SENEPIO were put to death for celebrating the praises of PAETUS
 “ THRASEA, and PRISCUS HELVIDIUS. This cruelty was not only
 “ extended against the authors themselves, but also against their writ-
 “ ings: the execution was to be performed by the triumviri, who
 “ had orders to burn in the forum, and at the town-hall, the works
 “ and last remains of these great and glorious men. In this fire they
 “ undoubtedly imagined they should be able to consume and abolish
 “ the voice of the Roman people, the liberty of the senate, and even
 “ every idea of human kind. The philosophers had been expelled
 “ the city beforehand ; arts and sciences had been driven into banish-
 “ ment; and this was done, that not the least remains of virtue should
 “ be met with in any place. Here we gave a noble example of our
 “ patience, who, because our fathers had seen the height of liberty,
 “ were resolved to try the depth of slavery ; all communication both
 “ of speaking and hearing being taken away by the inquisitions of
 “ the state : and we should even have lost the memory as well as the
 “ voice of complaint, if it had been equally in our power to forget as
 “ to be silent.”

What a representation is here of Roman servitude ! what a scene
 of inhumanity on one hand, and of slavish infatuation on the other !

Dii talem avertite pestem !

The first step towards the establishment of tyranny is the destruction of virtue, knowledge, the sciences, and the arts. Liberty is a tree, that receives nourishment from those roots, and to them therefore the ax must first be applied ; otherwise, though the body be cut down, and the spreading branches lie rotting on the ground, some degree of vegetation will still remain, and a young plant may arise, to shade and defend all who are either able or willing to serve their country. Ministers of arbitrary power act according to this system : they begin by burning and suppressing all kinds of literature in general, but in particular such books and papers, as tend either to explain or establish that freedom, to which every man has a right by the law of nature, and which he ought to give up only with his latest breath. This is a right indeed which obstructs, and breaks in upon, the systems

that are constantly pursued by the *Reguli* of the age: for which reason they spare no endeavours to take it away from mankind, whom they would deprive of all knowledge, and sense of liberty, because the first buddings of slavery must sprout up amidst the weeds of ignorance and sloth. But wise men cannot be deceived; they will not be lulled into bondage, or cajoled into chains; they are ever awake for the public good; and the glorious cause they are engaged in inspires them with a firmness and intrepidity unknown to the abettors of tyranny. The characters of HERENNIUS SENECIO, and ARULENUS RUSTICUS answer the ideas which we must naturally conceive of wise and able men. These two Romans, when alive, were dreaded by REGULUS; when dead, were odious to him: his malice reached beyond the grave; he hated virtue even on the other side of *Styx*; and was so intemperate in his reflections on SENECIO after his death, that he drew a reprimand upon himself from METIUS CARUS, another instrument of iniquity, who assumed the sole right of slandering all those persons, whose murders he had perpetrated without a copartner.

There is one observation, which must certainly occur upon the perusal of this letter: the natural tempers of PLINY and REGULUS appear so widely different, that it was impossible they should ever agree, or be thoroughly reconciled.

PLINY was a man of the utmost sweetness and candour of heart; he was tender, and benevolent; wise and unreserved; free from design, and without guile; constant and steady to his friends, calm and not vindictive to his enemies; dutiful to his prince, and faithful to his country; or, to sum up all, abhorred by DOMITIAN; employed, honoured, and entrusted by TRAJAN.

REGULUS was of a narrow timorous nature; he was filled with that vicious kind of ambition, which cannot be satisfied without the destruction of whatever stands in the way; he was dark and bloody; suspicious and designing; and, as he knew not how to be beloved, all he could attempt was to be feared. His tongue, like an adder, was poisonous and deadly to mankind: *his throat was an open sepulchre*, gaping wide to receive the dead; loyalty was ever in his mouth, but never in his heart; or, if he was loyal, it was only to such tyrants as NERO and DOMITIAN.

REGULUS

REGULUS easily discerned, that, in the reign of TRAJAN, PLINY was likely to be honoured and distinguished; the subtle REGULUS made it part of his religion to worship the first dawnings of greatness, wherever they appeared; he therefore applied himself immediately to SPURINNA and other common friends that they might intercede and endeavour to perfect a reconciliation: after their intercessions, he tried what effect his own rhetoric and submission might have: but PLINY was armed with a shield against all attacks. He waited for the brother of the unfortunate person, who had been put to death; and was obliged in friendship and equity not to shew any countenance to the prosecutor of RUSTICUS, till MAURICUS came back; *illum enim esse hujus consilii ducem, me comitem decet.*

There are two remarkable points in this epistle that frequently occur in the daily commerce of life. The first is, guilt occasions a man to discover something he would chuse to hide and wishes unsaid: the other is, ill-nature generally drives a man beyond his mark, and makes him say something, tending rather to the honour, than the prejudice of the person whom he strives to injure. Of the former, what can be a plainer instance, than where REGULUS confesses in particular, from the self-consciousness of having abused and vilified PLINY in general, that he had attacked him, together with SATRIUS RUFUS, in a sarcastical insinuation with regard to their judgments; which sarcasm, unless discovered by a voluntary confession, might have passed as a genteel compliment, although intended as an audacious sneer: Of the latter, the reproach of *the Vitellian scar* is a demonstration, that the malice of the heart often carries the policy of the head beyond the bounds of true artifice. The occasion of that scar, happened in the civil wars between VITELLIUS and VESPASIAN; wars, which though of no long continuance, were very bloody. RUSTICUS, who was then prætor, had been sent ambassador to PETILIUS CEREALIS, to treat upon terms of peace from VITELLIUS and the senate of Rome; but the soldiers of PETILIUS stubbornly rejected all offers of accommodation, and went so far in their rage, as to wound the ambassador, to kill one of his lictors, and to drive away his followers. This was universally looked upon as an infringement on the privilege of an embassy, and a manifest violation of the law of nations; “and the action, says TACITUS, “was held in greater abhorrence, because ARULENUS RUSTICUS, “besides

“ besides the sacred character of a prætor and ambaffador, was a man
“ greatly admired and esteemed.”

It is most probable that ARULENUS RUSTICUS received his wound in the midst of the popular fury, when he was utterly defenceless, his chief licitor murdered, and his whole train of attendants dispersed. In such a situation the bravest man must have endeavoured to save himself by flight. But REGULUS wanted sufficient candour to distinguish between a flight of necessity, and a flight of cowardice: his malice would have imputed to fear, an action which was the effect of prudence, and for which RUSTICUS was rather to be commended, than to be blamed.

Potest tamen fieri, ut hæc concussa labantur; nam gratia malorum tam infida est quam ipsi. An idol of a faction, when kept up by party, may compare himself to a man, who is tossed in a blanket: whilst he is at the highest pitch, he affords greatest pleasure to those, who hold the coverlet, and whenever he comes near the ground, they throw him up again with exultations; till growing weary of their office, they maliciously let their burthen fall, and then perhaps either his neck is dislocated, or some of his bones are broken. PLINY knew, that the props, which supported the wealthy and powerful MARCUS REGULUS, were in themselves rotten and unsound: he thought it best therefore to begin by making them totter, and of consequence the edifice, which they sustained, must immediately tumble down. It is an observation, that holds good to this day, and will to the end of the world, that the *gratia malorum* is as uncertain, as the smiles of fair weather: where there is no virtue, there can be no steadiness. Men, who have nothing but self-interest in view, follow the power, and not the person: it is equal to them, who guides the reins of empire, a PLINY or a REGULUS.

EPISTLE VI.

PLINY to CORNELIUS TACITUS.

YOU will laugh, and well you may.—Your friend,
your PLINY, the man you know so well, even I,
have

have taken three swingeing boars. PLINY? say you: Yes, PLINY, the individual PLINY; without any great interruption either of my indolence or of my studies. The nets were spread, and I sat down close to them; but instead of boar-spear, or javelin, I was armed with my pencil, and my pocket book. I first formed my thoughts, and then I writ them down, being resolved to return with my table-books full, although my hands should be empty.—Despise not this method of study.—It is surprising, how much the exercise of the body contributes to the alacrity of the mind. On every side of you are woods and wilderness; which, together with the silence, that constantly attends this diversion, are powerful incitements to study and reflection.—Therefore (take it from my authority,) when you go next a hunting, carry not only your bread-basket, and your leathern bottle, but your writing tables also; and you will find the mountains are not more inhabited by DIANA than by MINERVA. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

If a thorough-bred fox-hunter should read the curious narrative contained in this epistle, he would immediately conclude, that our author had not the least degree of spirit or taste in field diversions: Books and pen and ink are against the very essence of hunting. MINERVA has no more business in the woods, than DIANA has in the closet. But PLINY resolved not to desert his studies, even upon the most pressing temptations; he went out, rather because he was in the country, than because he had any delight in the sport, and knowing life to be short, he was determined not to squander away any part of it unimproved, or in absolute amusement.

The sages of antiquity were rather poachers than sportsmen: they had no kind of delicacy in the music of the hounds, or the composition of the pack. They had no ear; deepness, loudness, or sweetness of cry, were undistinguished, and disregarded by the Greeks
and

and Romans. Their dependance was upon their nets, more than upon their dogs: and the silence which PLINY hints at in this letter, proceeded from superstition, not from thought, for ^f SCALIGER expressly says, *Neutiquam faustum putamus in venatu loqui*: and ^g XENOPHON tells us, that the ancients in their method of boar-hunting made use of several insidious stratagems to draw the furious beast into certain traps called *tendicula*, where immediately they put an end to his life by dogs, javelins, and hunting-spears — Thus he fell like CÆSAR; overcome by numbers, and subdued by traitors.

How different are the venatorial games exercised by the heroes of our days! They court death, they are in love with danger, and they undergo the utmost fatigue, merely for the honour of breaking their own necks;

^h *Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax.*

Their sports, their courage, and their labours, are finely described by Mr. SOMERVILLE, in his poem called *the Chace*.

——— ⁱ Far o'er the rocky hills we range,
And dangerous is our course, but in the brave
True courage never fails. In vain the stream
In foaming eddies whirls; in vain the ditch
Wide-gaping threatens death. The craggy steep,
Where the poor dizzy shepherd crawls with care
And clings to every stone, gives us no pain,
But down we sweep, as stoops the falcon bold
To pounce his prey. Then up th' opponent hill
By the swift motions flung, we mount aloft.
So ships in winter-seas now sliding sink
A-down the steepy wave, then to's'd on high
Ride on the billows, and defy the storm.

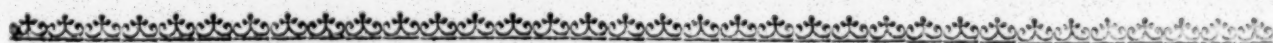
^f Jul. Cæs. Scaliger poetices lib. 1. pastoralia cap. 4.

^g Xenoph. Kynny.

^h Ovid Metamorph. Lib. 13. V. 390.

ⁱ SOMERVILLE'S Chace, B. 3. ver. 87.

It is observable, that the ancients knew nothing of the proper dress for hunting. They were entirely ignorant of the velvet cap, the jockey boots, the snaffle bridle, the black cravat, the green coat, and those other ornaments, which set off, and distinguish a true sportsman. When PLINY hunted, he was dressed like a capuchin, his gown by way of cowl was pulled over his head, he thought jingling couples too noisy to hang dangling by his side, nor were the names, and figures of his dogs engraved upon his buttons: his belt was neither laced nor embroidered, nor was his hair tucked up with a comb; his outward garb, like his inward disposition, was the habit of a philosopher.



E P I S T L E VII.

PLINY to OCTAVIUS RUFUS.

SEE to what an eminence you have exalted me, by giving me the same power and dominion, that HOMER gives to the great and mighty Jove.

Great Jove consents to half the chief's request,
But Heaven's eternal doom denies the rest^k.

In the same manner, I can deny half, and grant the other half of what you desire: for as it becomes me, since you make it your request, to refuse the inhabitants of *Andalusia* my assistance against one particular man; so on the other hand, I cannot think it consistent with my honour, and that steadiness, which you have ever approved of in me, to appear against a province, which I have formerly obliged by many good offices, and not without pains and

^k POPE's Homer, Book 16, Line 306.

hazard to myself. I will keep therefore this medium; out of your two requests, since you absolutely insist that I grant one, I will chuse that, which may not only satisfy your wishes, but will be most agreeable to your judgment; because I am not so much to consider, how a man, excellent as you are, may be pleased with my behaviour merely on this occasion, as how to gain and secure your approbation for ever. I hope to be at *Rome* about the middle of *October*, where I shall confirm to GALLUS in person, what I have here promised, for the performance of which I shall engage your word as well as my own: In the mean time you may answer for me in these lines;

Then with his fable brow he gave the nod,
That seals his word, the sanction of a God¹.

Why should not I quote HOMER's verses to you, since you will not let me quote any of your own, which I am so ardently desirous to see, that I think verily they are the only bribe, that could corrupt me to appear against the *Andalusians*. I had almost forgot, what ought least to have been forgotten, my thanks for those admirable dates you sent me: they are so good, that I know not whether to give the preference to them, or to the figs and mushrooms. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

There is a certain steadiness of mind in this letter, which can only proceed from a sound understanding; and a certain inclination to oblige, and to give no offence, which can only proceed from a ten-

¹ POPE's Homer, B. 17, v. 245.

derness of heart.—This epistle introduces itself with that good humour, which ought always to subsist among friends ; because with men of sense, subjects of the greatest consequence, when treated in an easy and familiar way, lose nothing of their weight and importance, by being devoid of that solemn stiffness, which is so acceptable to the sons of ignorance and pride.

OCTAVIUS RUFUS was a poet ; and PLINY finding it impossible to comply entirely with his friend's request, begins with a quotation out of HOMER, that he might make his denial, though but in part of that request, acceptable at least by the manner of declaring it. VIRGIL, who copied HOMER with a pencil little inferior to his great master's, has translated this quotation thus ;

*Audiit, et voti Phæbus succedere partem
Mente dedit, partem volucres dispersit in auras^m.*

Goodnature is a virtue, that inspires us with the truest notions of tenderness and compassion : but unless it is tempered by cool sense, and deliberate reflection, it drives us into an extreme of folly and weak compliance, which ends at last in loss of reputation, fortune, and friends. On the other hand, where goodnature (as in this letter) is guided by reason and directed by judgment, it is a godlike attribute, which puts us a degree beyond the common herd of mortals, and makes us worthy the peculiar care and providence of that great source, from whence it springs. To a mind naturally inclined to acts of kindness and humanity, nothing can be more irksome, than to be under a necessity of curbing those generous passions. This is finely illustrated by a passage in VIRGIL, where PALLAS, the son of EVANDER, addressing his supplications to HERCULES, who had formerly been his father's guest and friend, adjures the God by the genial nights, which in his mortal state he had once passed under EVANDER's roof, to crown him with victory, and to endow him with the spoils of TURNUS the *Rutilian* King.—Fate rendered the petition vain, and ALCIDES heard with sorrow a prayer which he could not grant ;

^m Æneid. II. v. 794.

*Audiit Alcides juvenem, magnumque sub imo
Corde premit gemitum, lacrymasque effudit inanes* ⁿ.

Here VIRGIL, whose benevolence of nature equalled the brightness of his genius, makes even a deity shed tears, when unable to defend and preserve the virtuous son of EVANDER; and the poet, by filling the breast of HERCULES with all the tenderness of affliction, beautifully insinuates, that the greatest courage, and the greatest compassion, generally dwell together in the same soul.

PLINY, who had always been an advocate for the *Bætici*, found himself much embarrassed by a request from GALLUS, who was his particular friend, to be council for him in a cause, which he was carrying on against them. The request was made by OCTAVIUS RUFUS, who insisted, that PLINY should not appear against GALLUS, if he was resolved not to appear for him. The difficulty of sustaining a consistent character gave occasion to this polite letter. *If I could*, says our author to RUFUS, *excuse myself upon your account to the Bætici, as no doubt I might, for not appearing against a friend, whom I love and honour, yet I should run the hazard of forfeiting that esteem, with which you favor me, by departing from a steady way of acting, that I have hitherto pursued, and which has always met with your approbation. I am to consider your opinion of me in general; and therefore will not, by endeavouring to please you in one particular instance, incur the misfortune of displeasing you ever after. The Bætici are a people, whom I have constantly served with the utmost fidelity, and have neither spared pains, nor feared dangers, when I thought I could obtain justice for the province, or do it essential service. I cannot therefore waver now, and plead against those people. But if I cannot plead against the Bætici, much less can I plead against GALLUS. The medium I intend to follow, agreeable to your request, is to withdraw, and to be absent upon the occasion.*

Bætica is a part of Spain now called *Andalusia*. It derived the name of *Bætica* from the river *Bætis*, (at this day the *Guadalqui-*

ⁿ *Æneid.* x. v. 464.

vir) which runs through the middle of the country. The elder PLINY describes it as a very fruitful spot: ° *Cun̄ctas provinciarum diviti cultu, et quodam fertili ac peculiari nitore præcedit.* In the time of our author, it was a Roman province; and the dangers he hints at, arose from the opposition he constantly exerted, and the accusations he was frequently engaged in, against the rapacious governors, who were instituted by DOMITIAN, to pillage, and feast upon this country. Under wicked emperors, provinces must expect wicked governors; and this particular territory was too fine a morsel, not to have some favorite vulture fix his claws upon it: but PLINY, ever zealous in the cause of justice, knew no fear, felt no fatigue, stooped at no danger, when oppressed right, or deserted virtue called him to the bar.

E P I S T L E VIII.

PLINY to POMPEIUS SATURNINUS.

YOUR letters, in which you importuned me to send some of my writings to you, came very seasonably. For I was just then fully determined in that point: you have therefore given the spur to a very willing racer, and have at once saved yourself the excuse of refusing such a trouble, and me the awkward bashfulness of asking it. I think I may now confidently use the offer, that is made me; neither can you for shame shrink back from your own proposal: however expect not any thing new from a man so indolent as I am. What I am going to ask you is to pass your judgment once more upon that speech, which I made to my fellow-citizens, when I dedicated a public library to their use. I

° Plin. Hist. Lib. 3. cap. 1.

remember, you then gave me some criticisms upon it in general ; but my present request is, that you would not only give a strict attention to the whole, but that you will not let a single syllable escape your most minute correction ; for even after your emendations I shall still be at liberty, either to publish, or suppress it. However your corrections may possibly determine me, and your pen, by frequently going over the work, may either find it unworthy and unfit for the public, or, by the same means, give it another turn, and make it fit to appear. But I must own, that the motives of my delays and apprehensions arise not so much from the speech itself, as from the subject of it : for certainly it is too full of vanity ; because I must inevitably wound my modesty (be my expressions never so condescending and humble) when I am obliged to set forth, not only the munificence of my ancestors, but my own generosity also. The path is dangerous and slippery, even although a man were seduced into it by the most urging necessity. For if an unwilling ear is lent to the praises we bestow upon others, how much more difficult will it be to obtain a patient hearing, when our whole discourse is about ourselves and our relations ? If virtue, when naked, is envied, it will be more so when set off in any ostentatious manner. In short, good deeds can only escape censure, by being buried in obscurity and silence. For which reason, I have often asked my own conscience, Is this composition of mine merely for my own vanity ; or is it not as much for the use of the public in general, as for myself ?

Another reflection, that occurs to me, is, that many things, which are necessary whilst we are performing an action, must lose their usefulness and their grace, the moment that action is performed. And not to go farther for
for

for examples, what could be more useful than to explain the grounds and motives of my liberality, and even to make it the subject of a discourse? from whence these advantages resulted, first our attention was for some time engaged in a series of virtuous and liberal thoughts; and then again, by dwelling long upon them, we became thoroughly acquainted with their beauties: and lastly, we were secured from the uneasiness of that repentance, which is the certain consequence of a rash and overhasty munificence: hence too we were in a manner brought to a habit of despising money; for as nature has instilled into all men a desire of keeping what they have, we, whose love of liberality proceeded from having long and well weighed that virtue in the equal balance of judgment and reflection, released ourselves from those chains, common as they are to the rest of mankind; and our generosity was likely to appear the more to our honour, as it was the effect of reason, and not the fallies of whim and passion. To these arguments may be farther added, that I did not exhibit games or gladiators; but, in their stead, established an annual income for the maintenance of young gentlemen of good families and small fortunes. Pleasures, that are merely for the entertainment of the eyes and ears, are so far from wanting commendation, that they ought rather to be restrained than to be encouraged by public speeches. To induce a man to undergo the irksomeness and fatigue of education, not only gifts, but the most enticing eloquence is necessary: for if physicians by kind and gentle language, persuade their patients to swallow down their nauseous, yet wholesom medicines; how much more ought a true lover of the public to use all the soft bewitching arts of oratory, when he exhibits an entertainment not so acceptable as useful to the

the people? especially when it was my business to endeavour, that what was given to those, who had children, should be approved of by those, who had none; and that the many others, who must be excluded from an honour, which could be enjoyed only by few, should patiently wait in expectation of that honour, and try to deserve it.

But as at the time I spoke this speech, I studied more the public advantage, than my own private reputation, in shewing how desirous I was, that the full intention and design of my benefaction should be thoroughly understood and take effect accordingly; so now I am afraid, by sending it into the world, I shall appear to have my own glory more in view, than any advantage, that can accrue to other people.—Besides all this, I cannot forget, that the consciousness of virtue gives more real pleasure, than the fame of it.

Glory should follow, not be pursued: and though merit may not always be crowned with glory, her charms are not the less from that misfortune. But the persons, who do public benefits, and afterwards set them off by public speeches, seem to have done them, that they might be spoken of, not to speak of them, because they had been done. By which means a performance, that might appear highly magnificent, when related by another, vanishes to nothing, when set forth by the author himself. For when people cannot destroy the action, they immediately attack the vanity of it: so that if you do a thing, that ought to be concealed, the action is blamed; and if you do a thing, that ought to be praised, you are blamed for not concealing it.

There is yet another very particular reason which deters me from making this oration public: for I did not speak
it

it to the people, but I spoke it to the Decurions, nor to them openly, and in the sight of the world, but privately in their own court. I fear therefore it will seem inconsistent, that at the time I spoke it I should fly from the applauses and acclamations of the multitude, and should now run after those applauses and acclamations by publishing the work: and that I should then keep out the people, for whom it was designed, even from the walls of the court, merely to avoid the least shew of ambition, and should now, as it were by a voluntary piece of ostentation, try to gain those very people, who can really reap no other benefit from my gift, than what may arise from the example of it.

Here you have the real causes of my delay: however I will follow your advice, be it what it will; and your authority shall be a sufficient reason for my actions. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

This eighth epistle has an obscurity in the original. It is too certain, that at this distance of time we must be often obliged to take our aim at random, and rather to guess whereabouts our author is, than to be sure of pointing him out exactly. But if our suppositions carry with them an air of probability, founded upon reason, they may be no less agreeable, than a well-turned story, which is sure to give pleasure, though it is not full of truth in every particular.

The learned and pains-taking commentators, from whom great aid and assistance might be expected, like moles, work underground, and spoil the surface, by flinging up little hillocks of dirt, that interrupt and obstruct our passage; and although perhaps they may not be entirely blind, yet they certainly have an utter abhorrence to light. Wide and warm are their criticisms and opinions *as to* various readings, *in* various manuscripts, *of* various adverbs, *and* various particles.—For example; when BOXHORNIIUS has declared

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himself

himself absolutely for *JAM*, and has writ and quoted accordingly, *SCHEGKIUS* pronounces in favour of *NUNC*, and draws us imperceptibly to his side, till *CATANÆUS* appears with *NUNCCINE*, and an interrogation; which immediately is answered in the negative by *RITTERSHUSIUS*, who brings in *NUPER* to the assistance of *NUNC*, and reduces *JAM* and *NUNCCINE* to silence, shame, and confusion. Passages of more importance and difficulty are left to persons of less learning, and more lively understandings.

But to come closer to this epistle—The occasion of it is a most exemplary piece of liberality in *PLINY*, who had given to the people of *Comum*, his native city, (whose inhabitants enjoyed the privilege of Roman citizens,) a public library, open and accessible, at all times, and to all degrees of men. This gift was attended by a speech, in which our author set forth the several advantages, he proposed to his fellow-citizens, by the present he then offered them, which was directed entirely to the benefit of others, and not to any fame or interest, that might accrue to himself. — On these occasions it was usual to institute games, and exhibit shews, that might at once adorn and perpetuate the solemnity of so public a benefaction: but the money, which, according to former custom, had been consumed upon these pompous extravagancies, was appropriated by *PLINY* to another use. He allotted it to establish an annuity for the maintenance and encouragement of a certain number of young gentlemen (all *Novocomenses*) whose pedigrees were honorable, but whose fortunes were low; gentlemen who laboured under the dignity of birth, and the slavery of want.

Could there be a more glorious institution?—If no additional munificence were recorded in the praise of *PLINY*, this gift of a public library to his fellow-citizens, and the establishment of a yearly stipend for the support of young gentlemen, whose inclinations and capacities led them to make use of that library, must give him a lustre amongst his contemporaries.

No virtue is more easily mistaken than true generosity; because profuseness, ostentation, and cunning, often assume the shape of munificence, and pass upon the world with applause and success. A man, who squanders away his money, without any kind of regard, or choice, upon whom his gifts are bestowed, has no more
right

right to the character of generosity, than the miser, who locks up his riches in a chest. Equipages, numberless servants, useless plate, and fine cloaths, are no greater instances of generosity, than they are of humility: neither can millions laid out to accomplish some sly design, that lurks behind large bags of money, be esteemed the effects of liberality, or be thought to proceed from a generous heart. PLINY, in this epistle, has distinguished extremely well between true and false liberality: his speech turned upon that topic; and as he could not avoid to mention in it the particular view he had in so exemplary a piece of munificence, he chose to call his bounty, an imitation of the noble examples set before him by his ancestors, rather than to assume the full glory of it to himself. His modesty farther obliged him to speak this oration to as small an audience as possible, and therefore he pronounced it to the *decurions* privately in their own court, not suffering the doors to be opened to the impatient multitude, who stood waiting without.

Modesty recommends itself, at the same time that it flies commendation; and, like the magnet, attracts even iron, without being conscious of the power it contains. What Mr. WALLER^r says of love, may be applied to modest men; *the victors fly from the vanquished, the conquerors shun the conquered*: and when^s MONTAIGNE in the wantonness of criticism accuses PLINY of vanity, we might imagine he had scarce read this letter, or at least was not captivated with those beauties in it, which equally discover a right judgment, and a bashfulness, proceeding from an unassuming heart. Not so Mr. COWLEY; he seems to have recollected this epistle, where he says, *It is an hard and a nice subject for a man to speak of himself; it grates his own heart, to say any thing of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear any thing of praise from him.*

The *decuriones*, spoken of here, by PLINY, were the *decuriones municipales*; a name given to the senators of the Roman colonies. They were called *decuriones*, because their court consisted of ten persons, ranged under one chief or leader, called *decurio*. AUGUSTUS chose this method to give the cities of *Italy*, such as had colonies,

^r In love the victors from the vanquish'd fly!

^s Book I. Chap. 39.

I was witness to a will: I was summoned as advocate in a cause: or, a certain neighbour of mine wanted my advice. The day you do these things, they seem of great consequence; but when you reflect, that every day has been thus employed, they appear of no consequence at all. And of this you are still more convinced, when you are retired at a distance into the country. Then your memory accuses you, and you cry out, *Alas! how many days have I consumed in trifles?* A reflection, that constantly occurs to me, as soon as I settle myself at *Laurentinum*, either to read, or write, or use such bodily exercises, as may conduce to the support and chearfulness of my mind. There I hear nothing, that I repent to have listened to: I say nothing, that I repent to have uttered: no person under my roof vents any scandal: nor is any person subject to my reproofs, except myself, who am often discontented at my own writings. No hopes deceive me; no fears molest me; no rumours disturb me: my books and my thoughts are the only companions with whom I converse. Welcome, thou life of integrity and virtue! Welcome, sweet and innocent amusement! Thou that art almost preferable to business and employment of every kind. O sea! O shore! thou genuine retreat of study! how do you assist and enrich our invention! with what thoughts do you inspire us! Arise then FUNDANUS! snatch the first opportunity; tear yourself from empty noise, useless hurry, and trifling labours; and give yourself up to study, or repose: for, as our friend ATTILIUS has wisely and jocosely said, *It is better to be quite inactive, than active to no purpose.* Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

In this letter PLINY seems to have considered the many inconveniences of a city life, and the advantages, pleasures, and satisfaction of a life passed in the country, in retirement and ease. He begins by taking notice, that the bustling employments of the town fill up a man's time so entirely, that he has not an hour's leisure to recollect of how little consequence, and how unsatisfactory those occupations are. It is a kind of fashion, says he, at *Rome* to be in a perpetual hurry about such trifles, as appear to us, when we reflect upon them afterwards, merely ropes of sand. He then mentions several ways, that contributed to kill time in that city. The instances he makes use of, are indeed things necessary in themselves to be done, such as marriages, contracts, wills, &c. but the witnesses were generally summoned out of compliment, and rather because they happened to be in town, than because their presence was indispensably wanted; so that a man once freed from the town would be certainly freed from such employments.

HORACE complains, like PLINY, of a city life, and says, that he no sooner approaches the gardens of MECÆNAS at *Rome* (near which were the burying places for the dead, and therefore they are called the *Esquilæ atræ*) than an hundred suitors leap out and seize upon him.

At simul atras,
Ventum est Esquilias, aliena negotia centum
Per caput et circum saliunt latus †,

But when I breathe Esquilian air,
I find as little quiet there :
An hundred men's affairs confound
My senses, and besiege me round †.

The poet then goes on to recite their various questions, solicitations, and complaints: all which particulars fully represent the miserable situation of a man of any importance, whose business draws

† Lib. 2. Satyr 6.

‡ FRANCIS'S Horace.

him to noise and hurry, and whose inclination leads him to study and repose. The whole satyr may serve as a beautiful comment upon this epistle.

PLINY further says, that when he comes to *Laurentinum* his country seat, and looks back upon those days, which he has passed at *Rome*, he is surprized and sorry, that so much of his time has been wasted upon trifles. At *Laurentinum* he either improved himself by reading and writing, or amused himself in such exercises, as contributed to the health of his body, and the strength and vigour of his mind. *Corpori vaco, cujus fulturis animus sustinetur.* Riding was probably his favorite exercise, as it is not only conducive to health and long life, but to study and speculation. It not only braces the nerves of the body, but enlivens the faculties of the soul; the one being so actuated by the other, and their sensations so woven together and intermixed, that where the proper temperament of the body is not preserved, the faculties of the soul cannot exert themselves with vigour. The motion of riding keeps up the human œconomy in the manner described by Juvenal, * *mens sana in corpore sano*; and at the same time that it helps digestion, it drives away all those noxious vapours so fatal to the *English* nation in particular, and so destructive to judgment and reason in general. It is performed at less expence of spirits than walking or any other exercise; and seems to have been instituted by providence, at once for the pleasure and preservation of mankind.

PLINY proceeds to tell us, that in the country, he is under no sort of restraint, either in what he hears or what he says. An universal freedom reigns there, and all the blessings of social life are enjoyed in their full liberty and perfection.

Nemo apud me quenquam sinistris sermonibus carpit. At my table, says SECUNDUS, there are no bitter insults vented against any person whatsoever; the present and the absent are equally safe there. This maxim laid down in opposition to slander and defamatory flurs, shews such a benevolence of nature, and such an uprightness of heart, that it cannot be sufficiently admired, or too closely followed. The *sermones sinistri* are those sort of malicious insinuations, which, by expressing little, leave room to imagine a great deal:

* Juvenal Sat. 10. v. 356.

they

they are like poisoned foils, with which no body imagines he can be deeply wounded, and yet their touch is infallible destruction. They consist of half-words, hints, doubts, and sneers; but they never could find admittance into PLINY's doors;

*Domus hac non purior ulla est,
Nec magis his aliena malis* ^z :

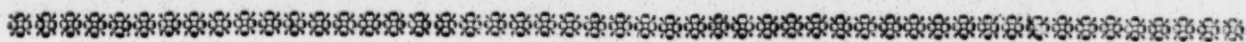
O dulce otium, honestumque, ac pæne omni negotio pulchrius! We perceive in this sentence the preference, which PLINY gives to the *otium*, or life of indolence, before the *negotium*, or life of business, not upon all, but upon many occasions. His meaning seems to be this: "As much as I prefer, says he, the serenity of repose, " to a more active, and less retired scene of life, yet there are some " particular kinds of employment, for which I would quit my " tranquillity with pleasure; employments, wherein the interest of " my friends, my duty to my emperor, or the prosperity of my " country, are depending, and concerned."

O mare! O littus! verum secretumque Μυσῆϊον! Quam multa invenitis! Quam multa dictatis! A philosopher, who like PLINY extracted knowledge, and gathered speculations from every outward object around him, must cry out, *Quam multa invenitis, dictatisque!* whenever he viewed the sea, looked down upon the ground, or turned his eyes up to heaven. The exclamations which he makes use of in this sentence, and which seem to rise upon him as he recollects the happy hours he has passed upon the strand, *παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης*, are extremely beautiful. The silence of the shore, the murmuring waves of the ocean, the prospect on every side, and the solitude of the place, were all so many excitements to thought and reflection. It was here our author chose to retire; it was here he chose to study; it was here he contemplated the wonders of the deep, and the mighty works of the creation: *Jovis omnia plena*. This was as far as the ablest and the wisest man could go, without the light of christianity: and therefore PLINY's notions of the deity must arise from the mighty wonders of the universe, *from the heavens above, from the earth beneath, and from the*

^z Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 9.

waters under the earth: each of which declareth the glory of God, each of which sheweth his handy work.

We see in this epistle a calmness and serenity of thought, a love of solitude and retirement, and a preference of the country to the town, which are the constant effects of a mind void of offence, and totally at peace with itself: and the epistle is at the same time a just censure upon that busy, buzzing, vain-glorious animal, an important trifler: who, in the days of PLINY, was constantly to be found in the *Forum* at *Rome*, and in these days, and in this island, is to be met with in all public places within the bills of mortality.



E P I S T L E X.

PLINY to ~~FABIUS JUSTUS.~~

Atrius (Cemens)

IF ever polite learning shone in our city, it is now in meridian glory: numerous and eminent are the examples of it: out of the many I need quote only one, EUPHRATES the philosopher. When I was a young soldier in *Syria*, I had an opportunity, by being frequently at his house, to look into him thoroughly: and I took some pains to be beloved by him: pains I should not say, for he is by nature easy of access, open, and a strong instance of the humanity which he teaches. - I wish I had fulfilled the hopes he conceived of me at that time, in the same proportion that he has added to the virtues he then had: or, perhaps, I admire those virtues more now than I did at that time, because I understand them better: though as yet I have only an imperfect idea of them; for as in pictures, statues, and works of that kind, a man must be an artist to be a judge: so in wisdom, a man must have it in himself to judge of it in others. But if I judge rightly,

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the virtues of EUPHRATES are so eminent and conspicuous, that they must necessarily affect any man who has a moderate share of learning. His arguments are carried on with great acuteness, great weight, and great embellishments: and he frequently displays that sublime and diffusive kind of eloquence, which is so remarkable in PLATO. His style is fluent and often varied, and so distinguished by sweetness, that he both leads and drives those who are most obstinately determined to oppose him. Add to this the tallness of his stature, the gracefulness of his countenance, his fine head of hair, and his bushy and silver beard: which, though they may be looked upon as the gift of chance, and of no intrinsic value, yet greatly encrease the veneration paid to him. His dress is perfectly neat and plain: his looks are grave, not forbidding; so that at first sight he will strike you with great awe, but it is an awe void of fear. The politeness of his manners is equal to the innocence of his life. He attacks the vices, and not the persons of men; nor does he so much chastise, as amend them: your attention must inevitably follow, and hang upon his instructions: and when you are perfectly convinced by his exhortations, you will wish to hear them again.

He has three children, two of which are sons: these he has educated with the utmost care: his father in law, POMPEIUS JULIANUS, is a man of a most exalted character, but particularly in this, that he, who was governor of a province, and had the chief nobility there at his command, chose out EUPHRATES for his son in law, not as a man distinguished by his honours, but by his wisdom.—But why should I speak any more of one who is lost to me? Is it to encrease the anguish that I suffer in such a loss? tied down as I am to one of the greatest, yet most troublesome

blesome employments in the empire: an employment that obliges me to hear causes, to sign petitions, to make up public accounts, and to write innumerable letters, where not one word of polite literature can possibly be introduced.—Now and then I take an opportunity (for sometimes I snatch a moment from business) to complain to EUPHRATES of the fatigues of my employment: he comforts me by assurances that it is one of the most beautiful parts of philosophy to carry on the affairs of the public, to make one self master of business, to give judgment, to expedite and to execute justice, and thus to put in practice the various lessons we learn from the philosophers themselves. In this instance his persuasive eloquence fails: nor can I be convinced that it is better to be employed as I am, than to pass my time, in attending his lectures, and learning his precepts, for which reason I am more earnest in exhorting you, who have more leisure, that the next time you come to *Rome* (and you should come the sooner for such a call) you will suffer yourself to be polished by so masterly a hand. In this you perceive I do not, as many do, envy others the benefits I cannot partake of; on the contrary, I feel a most sensible pleasure, in seeing my friends enjoy those advantages, which fate denies to me. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

Every man bears two characters: the one directly the reverse of the other, and perhaps neither exactly true. This arises from the blind partiality of friends, and the boundless inveteracy of enemies: by the first we are painted gods, by the latter devils, and yet look into us, and we are only an earthly being, situated betwixt heaven and hell. EUPHRATES the philosopher, whose picture is here drawn in so sweet an attitude by PLINY, is painted by DION CASSIUS in the most hideous colours imaginable: in such a case, where

the same man is represented, like JANUS, with two different faces, we must first take a full view of the painters themselves, before we can form an unbiassed judgment of their works: and upon enquiry we shall find DION to have been an author, not only poisonously exact in his characters, but guilty of manifest falshood, and gross forgeries. Monsieur BAYLE instances two, and very justly concludes, that such untruths make him suspect a thousand facts related elsewhere by that author, of all which facts we have only his own unsupported word (too brittle to lay any great stress upon) for a testimony. But to clear up and explain the injured reputation of EUPHRATES, we may rest on the unblemished honour of PLINY, which, like the shield of AJAX, will at once cover himself and his friends.

The friendship between EUPHRATES and our author began, when the latter was extremely young: when he was learning the art of war in *Syria*. It may be imagined from thence, that he was designed for the army rather than the bar, but such an imagination can only arise from the narrow method of education, that prevails in our own times. The Romans proceeded in another manner; they bred up the young gentlemen, who were intended for the bar, in the science of war, and military affairs; so that after they had filled the offices of prætor, or consul, they might be capable of governing provinces, and acting, if required, with as much knowledge and authority in the camp, as in the forum: those, who were designed for the army, were previously brought up to understand the civil constitution, and to know the full scope and extent of the Roman laws: by which means most of their generals were orators, and most of their orators were generals. The soldier knew how to administer justice, and the lawyer knew how to exercise and command troops; nor can a more compleat character be formed, than the soldier and the orator both joined in one man.

A man, the state's whole thunder born to wield
And shake at once the senate and the field².

At the time that PLINY wrote this letter to ATRIUS CLEMENS, he

² POPE.

bore one of the chief offices of the state: he was *præfectus ærarii*, a commissioner of the treasury; CORNUTUS TERTULLUS was his colleague in that office. PLINY was equal to the trust and dignity of so great an employment.

E P I S T L E XI.

PLINY to ~~CANINIUS RUFUS.~~ /

Fabius Justus

IT is an age since I heard from you: you will say you have nothing to write: write then to tell me so: or let your letter consist only of that old fashioned compliment, *hoping that you are well, as I am at this present writing.* This, even this, will satisfy me: for what can I desire more? you imagine I jest; upon my word I am serious: tell me, pray tell me, how you do? *Oh answer me! Let me not burst in ignorance.* Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

Absence is the touchstone of friendship. A man of an unsteady disposition flights and forgets those when absent, who were his darling favorites when present: but the heart of a firm and faithful friend is not to be altered by time, place, or other separating circumstances. It is from this constancy of soul, that PLINY shews, in the foregoing short epistle, such a fervency of affection, and such an impatient eagerness after the health and welfare of FABIVS JUSTUS.

In the freedom and frequency of conversation betwixt two persons, whose intimacy leads them to be often together, little jars, and sple-
netic altercations will now and then arise, which occasion coolness, and heart-burnings, that create a shiness, and stir up an uneasiness on each side: but absence cures and obliterates all such differences; and the absent friend appears like a diamond set to view at a distance,
which

which displays amazing brightness, when not too close to the eye, but upon a nearer approach, and a more minute examination, is often discovered to have some small flaws, that take away from the lustre, and depreciate the value.—Death, which is only a longer absence, has the same effect, but in a much stronger degree; so that we frequently see the ill-natured husband weeping with great sincerity over his wife's monument, and the morose father breaking his heart for an undutiful son: there is a strange perverseness in human nature; we love and hate at wrong seasons; past and future pleasures we view through magnifying glasses; the present we never enjoy: but like children cry after those play-things, which, when we have in our hands, we tear to pieces.

To justify these general observations, may we not suppose, that when PLINY says to FABIVS, *Ludere me putas*, he is conscious of some little bickerings that had passed between them, the remembrance of which might make FABIVS wonder at such warm expressions of love and friendship, and such a zealous and kind reproach for not being so constant in his epistolary correspondence, as he had been in his personal visits.

EPISTLE XII.

PLINY to CALESTRIUS TYRO.

I Have suffered a most dreadful shipwreck, if shipwreck can give an idea of the loss I sustain by the death of CORELLIVS RUFVS: he is gone! fallen too by his own choice! a gauling aggravation of my sorrow: for to me, that kind of death which proceeds neither from nature nor from fate, seems of all others the most to be lamented: where sickness puts an end to life, we submit to the inevitable necessity, and are comforted; but where death is voluntarily called in, our grief feels no allay, because we must believe our friends might have lived much longer.

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CORELLIUS has been induced to this action by the strength of reason, (which to wise men stands in the place of fate) notwithstanding the many inducements he had to live; a clear conscience, an excellent character, great influence and interest: add to these, his daughter, his wife, his grandson, his sisters, and, amidst so many tender pledges, his true and faithful friends: but he laboured under so long, and so grievous an illness, that with all these valuable considerations of life, the motives of death were still stronger. At three and thirty years of age (as I heard him declare) he was first seized with the gout. It was hereditary to him: for our distempers, like other things, are often delivered down to our posterity. Whilst he was young, he conquered and kept it under by abstinence and temperance: and upon the first attack after he grew into years, he got the better of it by the greatness of his mind. I came to him in the reign of DOMITIAN, when he had a house not far from *Rome*, and found him suffering under the most inexpressible anguish, and the most wretched torments that can be imagined. (For at that time the distemper had not confined itself to his feet only, but had wandred through every part of his body.) The attendants in his bed-chamber immediately went out: This was his custom whenever any of his most familiar friends came to him: nay, his wife, a woman capable of being entrusted with the highest secrets, left the room. He rolled his eyes, and said to me: *wherefore, Oh! wherefore do you think I bear my cruel pains so long? It is that I may, if possible, outlive this monstrous tyrant^a, though it were but one single day. Great JUPITER! hadst thou bestowed upon me a body equal to my mind, my wishes should have been accomplished.* Heaven

^a DOMITIAN.

granted

granted his desire, with which he was so fully contented, that knowing he should now die a free unenslaved Roman, he broke through all the lesser ties, numerous as they were, that chained him down to life. His distemper had for some time encreased, although he had tried to assuage it by temperance : at length the continuance of it overcame his constancy : and he had already abstained, during four days, from all kind of nourishment : when his wife HISPULLA sent our common friend, CAIUS GEMINIUS, to me, with the dismal news, that CORELLIUS was determined to die : that neither the entreaties of herself, nor her daughter, made the least impression upon him, and that I was the only person left, who could reconcile him to life. I ran immediately, and was already just at his door, when again HISPULLA sent JULIUS ATTICUS to let me know, that now even my intercessions would not avail, so obstinately was he hardened in his resolution. He had said to his physician, who was pressing him to take some food, *I am determined.* A sentence that filled my soul at once with astonishment and grief. I now reflect what a friend, what a man I am deprived of! He was sixty seven years old when he died : a length of age sufficient for men of the most robust constitutions : I know it. He is released from perpetual torture ; I know it. He left his relations, nay he left the commonwealth, dearer to him than all his relations, flourishing and happy. This I know also. And yet I mourn his death, as if he had fallen in the flower of his youth, and the full strength of his constitution : but to own to you my weakness ; my sorrow is in a great measure occasioned upon my own account : I have lost, oh I have lost the witness, the guide, the master of my conduct. In short to tell you what, in the first transports of my grief, I said to our neighbour CALVISIUS : I fear I shall
grow

grow less circumspect than I have been: administer therefore some comfort to me: tell me not that he was old, that he was infirm, (they are circumstances I have long known) but let it be some new, some uncommon consolation: something I have never heard, nor read of; all that I have already heard, or read, occurs to my memory; but that is not sufficient to overcome my sorrow. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

Among the many misfortunes to which human kind are liable, the death of friends is the least supportable. If the doctrines and consolation of christianity are often not sufficient to alleviate the weight, how much more heavy must it be to heathens, labouring under the darkness and uncertainty of a future state? They had indeed a mythology, in which were set before them a heaven and a hell, rewards and punishments, happiness and misery: but the system was mixed with such an infinite number of strange fables, stuffed with so many shocking absurdities, and built on such notorious improbabilities, that it was impossible to be believed by men of learning and philosophy: from the light of nature therefore our author seems to have drawn the following sentiment.

Est enim luctuosissimum genus mortis, quæ non ex naturâ, nec fatalis videtur. Nam utcunque in illis, qui morbo finiuntur, magnum ex ipsâ necessitate solatium est; in iis verò quos arcessita mors aufert, hic insanabilis dolor est, quod creduntur potuisse diu vivere.

“ My friend, says PLINY, has fallen by his own hands: a most
 “ melancholy circumstance in the loss of him; for surely that sort
 “ of death which is the effect of choice, and not of fate, is, of all
 “ others, the most to be regretted, especially when I consider that he
 “ might have lived much longer: so that I am deprived of that com-
 “ fort which arises from a total submission to the decrees of heaven.”

Reason, even unassisted, might teach us, that the Being, who gave us life, has a right to dispose of it, when and how he thinks fit: and so sensible were the ancients of this doctrine, and of the

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horrid impiety of self-murder, that VIRGIL^b has placed the *Suicides* in a state of punishment, arising entirely from their own reflections on what they had done.

*Proxima deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi letum
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas. Quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!
Fas obstat, tristisque palus inamabilis undâ
Adligat, et novies Styx interfusa coerces.*

It is impossible to read the authors of antiquity, whose writings are so justly esteemed models of every moral virtue, without being convinced that they imagined themselves to be accountable after death for the actions of their life, and although self-murder became a fashion among some of the Romans, who thought it more honourable to die, than to be enslaved, yet where suicide was committed merely to avoid pain, and to find relief from agony, it was rather deemed an act of impatience than of bravery: and PLINY takes notice in this letter, that, notwithstanding the long struggles of CORELLIUS, against the torments of his distemper, his constancy at length forsook him, and he died obstinately refusing all nourishment, and declaring with his last breath, that he was tired of life, weary of his sufferings, and positively determined to expire.

The description which PLINY gives of his friend in pain, and the speech which CORELLIUS makes from the couch of sickness, are so concise in the original, that they seem to demand some kind of explanation.

“ In the reign of DOMITIAN, CORELLIUS RUFUS had a most
“ sharp and dangerous fit of the gout. I happened to visit him at
“ that time: he was in a lodging he had taken near the town for
“ the benefit of air: as soon as I entered his chamber, his servants
“ that were about him withdrew, for he would not suffer his domestics, though ever so useful or necessary in his illness, to be present, when any of his friends were in the room: no, nor even

^b Æneid. 6. v. 434, &c.

“ his

“ his wife, though she was a woman of prudence and secrecy beyond the generality of her sex.

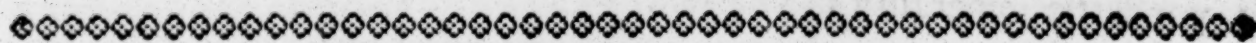
“ When we were alone together, he cried out, rolling his eyes with pain and indignation : Oh! SECUNDUS! SECUNDUS! Are you not amazed I suffer these torments? To what end do you imagine I live? Is life worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Yes, yes, on one account it is: let me outlive DOMITIAN but one single day, and I am satisfied: let me see that tyrant fall before me, and I die with pleasure: Gods! had the strength of my body been equal to that of my mind, at this moment my hand should fulfil the wishes of my heart.”

The next sentence, *affuit tamen Deus voto*, stands in great need of a comment. We might infer from the words, *Heaven granted his request*, that CORELLIUS RUFUS had gathered strength sufficient to kill DOMITIAN, but the context is this.

“ Though the Gods did not endue him with strength sufficient to perform the mighty deed which his thoughts had entertained, yet they granted his request of outliving DOMITIAN. Heaven permitted him to see the tyrant fall: DOMITIAN perished, and RUFUS survived.”

The latter part of this letter is entirely dedicated to grief: it shews PLINY in a different, and perhaps more amiable light than any of the preceding epistles: he is lost in sorrow, and concludes almost in the words of SHAKESPEARE ;

My particular grief
Is of so floodgate and o'er-bearing nature,
That it ingluts and swallows other sorrows,
And yet is still itself.



EPISTLE XIII.

PLINY to SOCIUS SENECEO.

THIS year has produced a most plentiful harvest of poets. Scarce a day in the month of *April* has passed without a poem: when learning flourishes, I am always pleased. I would have men of genius *come forth and suffer themselves to be admired*: Though, it is true the people in general attend unwillingly on rehearsals. As an example of it, you will see great numbers sitting idly in the lobbies, listening to every story-teller that comes in their way, sending in to know whether the orator is yet in his rostrum, whether he has gone through the preface of his speech, whether the greatest part of his performance be over, and so at length they vouchsafe to come, but how? slowly and with reluctance. Nor can they then be prevailed upon to stay, but retreat before the end of it, with this difference, that some steal away sily and unobserved, others go off boldly and unconcerned. Heavens, how unlike is this to the behaviour of CLAUDIUS CÆSAR; who (no longer ago than within the memory of our fathers,) is said to have heard a loud noise, as he was walking in his palace, and to have asked what was the cause of it? They told him NONIANUS was rehearsing in public: upon which the Emperor voluntarily quitted his company, and immediately became one of the audience: but now early solicitations joined to frequent advertisements cannot prevail upon the idlest idler to be

: WALLER.

present:

present: or if he comes, it is with a complaint that he has lost the whole day, because it is the only day that he really has not lost! but from hence the more praise and applause must certainly accrue to those, whom neither the laziness nor the pride of such an audience can deter from writing, and speaking in public. For my own part, I have scarce ever absented myself from these exercises; which, it is true indeed, were performed by my friends: for I have the honour to be beloved by most of those who love polite literature, these have been the reasons that I have wasted more time in town than I designed. I may now fly back to my retirement, and set about some work, which I shall certainly not rehearse in public; lest it should seem, that I attended these rehearsals, not so much to hear, as to put in a claim of being heard in my turn: for it is in this, as in all other matters of favour, if retaliation is expected, the grace of having been one of the audience is entirely lost. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

Throughout this epistle, PLINY discovers his love of letters, and his assiduity and unwearied attendance on the public rehearsals: Exercises, which were generally performed by choice spirits, who resolved to dedicate themselves to the muses; or by young orators, who were determined to shine in the forum, and at the bar. To these different ends they rehearsed verses, or made speeches, before as large an audience, as by interest, entreaties, or advertisements, they could draw together. These poetical rehearsals lasted, as we learn from MARTIAL, during the whole day.

Auditur totâ sæpe poeta die ^d.

^d Martial. Lib. x. Ep. lxx.

PLINY,

PLINY, from poets, turns his observations upon orators, and laments the little attendance that is paid to their recitals, even less than in the days of CLAUDIUS CÆSAR, who did great honour to NONIANUS by appearing, unasked, at one of his rehearsals. NONIANUS is mentioned by QUINTILIAN as an historian: †SERVILIUS NONIANUS *ipse a nobis auditus est, clari vir ingenii, et sententiis creber, sed minus pressus quam historiæ auctoritas postulat.* But his works are entirely lost.

In the reign of AUGUSTUS arts and sciences were cultivated with great success: they rose to their highest pitch of glory, and they made Rome the envy and example of the whole world: even Athens yielded to her the laurel of fame. In the reigns of TIBERIUS and CALIGULA learning grew languid, and held down her head. TIBERIUS was too wicked to be learned, and CALIGULA knew no more of letters than his consul the horse: however, under CLAUDIUS CÆSAR some degree of literature revived: that dull Emperor had in his younger days passed away much time at study: nay, he was an author, and had a kind of affection for men of genius and erudition: of which, to say truth, the instance quoted in this epistle is perhaps the strongest that can be found in history.

These public orations are so contrary to our method of introducing young gentlemen to the bar, that no more time need be taken up in an explanation of that ceremony. There is a shadow of it still subsisting in our universities: and certainly speeches delivered from the *rostrum* help to overcome an unhappy bashfulness, which too often eclipses men of the greatest merit, and of the brightest talents. A bashfulness which the Greeks called *δυσωπία*, and the French *la mauvaise honte*.

† Quintilian. Lib. x. cap. 1.

E P I S T L E XIV.

PLINY *to* JUNIUS MAURICUS.

YOU ask me to look out for a husband to whom you may give your niece: a task in which you very rightly prefer me before all others. For you well know how I loved and honoured that excellent man her father. You well know by what encouragements he cherished my youth, and what praises he bestowed upon me at that time, to make me afterwards capable of deserving them. No command of yours to me could carry greater weight and pleasure with it; nor can I be engaged in a more honourable undertaking, than in chusing out some young man from whom may descend grandsons and successors to ARULENUS RUSTICUS. Such a man might be long to look for, if MUNITIUS ACILIANUS did not present himself to my mind, born as it were for that purpose: he is some few years younger than I am, so that we live with the easy familiarity and affection of young people, and yet he reveres me as an experienced old man. He submits to be modelled and instructed by me, in the same manner as I have been by you, and your brother: his country is *Brixia*, in our part of *Italy*, which still retains and keeps up the modest, frugal, and plain manners of the ancients. His father is MINICIUS MACRINUS, the head of the equestrian order, because he always declined a higher station: for VESPASIAN offered to choose him one of the prætors, but he was constant and firm in preferring virtuous retirement to such pursuits as ours, which I am in doubt whether to call ambition or dignity. His grandmother, on his mother's
side,

side, is SERRANA PROCULA, a native of *Padua*. You know the manners of the place, but SERRANA is an example of the strictest virtue even to the *Paduans*. His uncle is P. ACILIUS, a man of singular authority, prudence, and integrity. In short, throughout the whole family you will find nothing but what will please you, as much as in your own: as for ACILIANUS himself, he is a man of a strong constitution, indefatigable at business, and yet of an invincible modesty. He passed through the several offices of questor, tribune, and prætor, with great honour, and so has saved you the trouble of soliciting those employments for him. His countenance is free and open, his complexion ruddy and healthful, his whole person beautiful and genteel, and his carriage graceful and senatorian. These are accomplishments by no means (according to my way of thinking) to be overlooked, but they are such as ought to be mentioned as a reward due to a young lady's unblemished chastity. I do not know whether I should add that his father is very rich: when I consider to whom I am pointing him out as a son-in-law, I think riches ought not to be mentioned; but when I reflect upon the prevailing customs of the times, and particularly upon the laws of our city, by which men are valued according to the value of their estates, certainly in that view riches are not to be omitted. Besides when we look forward to a numerous posterity, and the many consequences of marriage, a good fortune is a very necessary ingredient. Perhaps you will imagine I have been indulging my partial fondness for ACILIANUS, and have strained the character beyond the truth: but I give you my word you will find hereafter that every thing I have said will bear a much more extensive latitude than I have taken. I love the
young

young man entirely, and he deserves my affection. But still a religious part of that love is not to overload my friend with praises. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

There could not be a stronger mark of confidence shewn by one man to another, than by MAURICUS to PLINY, in an epistle, to which this appears to be the answer. ARULENUS RUSTICUS, who, as we learn by the fifth epistle of this book, fell a sacrifice to REGULUS, left behind him, recommended to the care and guardianship of his brother, JUNIUS MAURICUS, an only daughter, for whom her uncle (§ *vir gravis, prudens, multis experimentis eruditus*) desires PLINY to chuse a husband.

Match-makers are at this day looked upon as the pest of mankind; but their disreputation must have been occasioned by the wickedness of mercenary wretches, who try to chain two people together, without any other consideration, than the private advantages, that may accrue to themselves. Such match-makers may be compared to certain jockeys, who, when they bring forth an horse to sale, have an art of making him appear healthy, docile, and worth purchasing; but the buyer frequently finds him the next day vicious, head-strong, or perhaps half eaten up with the farcy. Yet what can be in itself a greater instance of friendship, or an action more laudably virtuous, than to endeavour to make a man and a woman of merit happy in each other during their lives? PLINY embraces the employment with great alacrity and zeal; and his pleasure is encreased by the qualifications, and admired accomplishments of MINUTIUS ACILIANUS, whose fortune, person, and character, seem suited to the education and virtue of ARULENA.

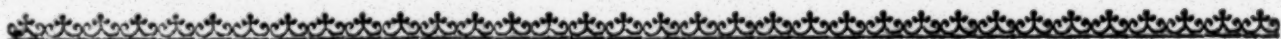
When a marriage is compleated that takes rise from good sense, inclination, and equality of age, dignity, and fortune, (such a match as PLINY proposes in this epistle,) every branch of the family partakes of the general joy: the parents, the relations, the friends,

§ Vide lib. 1. Epist. 5.

taste the sweet effects of the happy union, and the whole scene is a representation of heaven, as near as the state of mortality can come up to it.

For all we know of what the blessed do above,
Is that they sing, and that they love ^h.

But when we turn our eyes towards the other side of matrimony, towards the black, the melancholy, and the tempestuous part of it, the objects are too hideous to be looked at, and the subject too dismal to be delineated.



EPISTLE XV.

PLINY to SEPTITIUS CLARUS.

YOU are a fine gentleman. You promise to come to supper, and never come; it is but justice, that you should pay every farthing the supper cost. An expence, that you will smart for.—Let me see then;

There were served up to each guest a single lettuce, three snails, two eggs, a cake, the composition of which was honey, wine, and snow, (I mention snow as a most essential part of the expence, because it perishes in the dish, and cannot appear again) *Andalusian* olives, gourds, garlic, and a thousand other things, equally delicate. Then you might have heard the players; you might have attended to a lecture; or you might have listened to a harp; or indeed, such is my generosity, you might have had all these entertainments together. But

^h WALLER.

you

you (I forget at whose house) regaled yourself with oysters, ragouts of pork, and lobsters, and saw the dancers from *Cadiz*, in preference to what I could offer you.

You must suffer for this sufficiently; I cannot yet determine in what manner: but you have acted cruelly: you have punished me; perhaps I should say too much if I added, you have punished yourself also, and yet I think I may affirm it.—How agreeably had we passed our time, sometimes in diversion, sometimes in laughter, and sometimes in study! You may sup more splendidly at many places, but no where with more innocent mirth, or more unguarded freedom. Upon the whole make the experiment; and if hereafter you do not chuse to sup with me rather than with any other person, I will excuse you for ever. Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Romans had three meals in the day. The first was the *jentaculum*, or breakfast, which was only a piece of bread dipped in pure wine: the second was the *prandium*, or dinner, which was always very plain and moderate: and the third was the *cæna*, or supper: this was the chief, and generally the last meal, and was never begun till the business and fatigue of the day were over. There were indeed sometimes two other meals; the *merenda*, or afternoon's beaver, and the *comessatio*, or collation after supper: the first of which was rather to satisfy hunger, than to indulge luxury, and the latter was merely to promote riot, drunkenness, and noise: Suetonius, in his life of Vitellius, has this expression: *Epu- las trifariam semper, interdum quadrifariam dispertiebat: in jentacula, et prandia, et cænas, comessationesque.* “VITELLIUS never failed to make three, and sometimes four meals a day: a breakfast, a dinner, a supper, and after that a revelling banquet.”

The Romans generally supped about three o'clock during the spring and autumn seasons, in winter about two, and in the heat

of summer never sooner than four. The supper consisted of three courses: the first was called the *antecæna* or *gustatio*; in which were served up eggs, cockles, and different kinds of shell-fish. The second course was called *cæna*, and consisted of the choicest dainties, amongst which there was always one dish superlatively good, distinguished by the name of the *caput cænæ*, and never suffered to go away untasted. The third course was the desert, or the *mensa pomorum*, a service of apples, and various sorts of fruits.

As apples were brought up in the last course, so were eggs in the first; from whence the proverb, *ab ovo usque ad mala*. And during the time of supper the guests were entertained with several diversions, pantomimes, players, musicians, and sometimes gladiators: those, who were more studiously inclined, had certain select pieces read to them out of the best authors; as appears by the account, which PLINY gives to SEPTITIUS CLARUS: *Audisses comædos, vel lectorem, vel lyricen, vel omnes: and afterwards, quantum nos lusissemus, risissemus, et studuissemus.*

The feast of TRIMALCHIO by PETRONIUS, and a dialogue in *Lucian* called *Symposium*, or the *Lapithæ*, explain the Roman suppers, when carried beyond the rules of sobriety, with infinite wit and humour. The feast of NASIDIENUS, in the eighth satire of HORACE, mentions the manner of wiping down the table:

*Puer altè cinctus acernam
Gausape purpureo mensam perterfit, et alter
Sublegit quodcunque jaceret inutile, quodque
Posset cænantes offendere.*

And though tablecloths were not in fashion, yet, as appears by the same satire, every man had his napkin:

*Varius mappâ compescere risum
Vix poterat.*

As a farther instance of cleanliness, a *vestis cænatoria*, or supper garment, was put on whenever the Romans lay down to table; and according

according to SILIUS ITALICUS, the Gods were constantly addressed in prayer;

*Nec prius aut epulas aut munera grata Lyæi
Fas cuiquam tetigisse fuit, quam multa precatus
In mensam.*

This was the conduct of a Roman entertainment, when managed with decency, elegance, and order; and for any other, it is not to be found in PLINY, whose manners and morals were too delicate to admit of riot and intemperance.

XX

E P I S T L E XVI.

PLINY to EURICIUS.

I Have long been an admirer of POMPEIUS SATURNINUS, whom I may distinguish by the title of our particular friend. I extolled his genius, even before I knew how luxuriant, how fertile, and how extensive that genius was: but now I am wholly captivated by him, and he has full possession of me.

I have often heard him plead with great earnestness, and energy, and at the same time with great politeness and elegance; and whether his speeches were premeditated or not, they were equally excellent. His reflections were always rightly adapted and numerous; his style was weighty and graceful, and his words were sonorous and sterling.

All these things please extreamly, when you hear them delivered with a remarkable vehemence and fire; they please too even without those advantages. You will perceive

ceive this as well as I, when you take up any of his speeches to read; and you will allow him comparable to some of the ancients, whom he emulates. Look upon him in another light as an historian, and he will engage you still more. His narrations are concise, perspicuous, delightful, bright, and even sublime. His historical speeches have the same spirit with his orations, only they are more nervous, more close, and more contracted.

Add to this, that his verses are equal to the poetry of CATULLUS or CALVUS. Wit, sweetness, satire, love, are mingled in every line; his verses are generally light and easy, but sometimes harsh and unpolished, and this too in imitation of CATULLUS and CALVUS.

He lately read to me some letters, which he said were written by his wife. I protest I thought he had been reading PLAUTUS, or TERENCE in prose: and whether the letters were his wife's, which he affirms, or whether they were his own, which he denies, certainly he deserves an equal share of glory, either in having composed them himself, or in making a lady, young and unexperienced when he married her, so learned and polite.

I have him before me all the day; I peruse him before I write; I peruse him after I have written; I peruse him when I would unbend my mind; and he is still the same, and still new. I entreat and advise you to follow my example; and let it not be an objection to his works, that the author himself is alive. If he had flourished amongst those authors, whom we have never seen, we should not only enquire after his books, but we should search out for statues and pictures of him. And shall the honour and happiness we enjoy by having him amongst us, grow languid for that very reason? Surely it is an erroneous and an ill-natured way of thinking, not to admire a man, who is
worthy

worthy of admiration, because we can see him, speak to him, hear him and embrace him; and because we have not only an opportunity of praising his works, but loving his person. Farewell.

O B S E R V A T I O N S.

Although PLINY throughout all his epistles displays an elegance, that charms and improves us at the same time, yet the characters drawn by him of his friends are generally his most accomplished pieces. POMPEIUS SATURNINUS was the person, to whom he addresses his eighth epistle of this book. By the purport of that letter, he shews the confidence he reposed in the judgment and integrity of SATURNINUS: And, by the character of the same person in this letter, he tacitly gives the reasons of that confidence. He tells us, that SATURNINUS was eminent as a lawyer, an historian, and a poet: in pleading causes he was at once earnest in the defence of his clients, and polite in the treatment of his adversaries; a generous enemy, and a determined friend. As an historian, he was particularly nervous in his stile, and perspicuous in his narrations: in his poetry, like CALVUS and CATULLUS, he dealt equally in satire and in love. The poems of C. LICINIUS CALVUS are irrecoverably lost: he was the intimate friend of CATULLUS; he has been mentioned by PLINY in the second epistle of this book, as an orator, whom he admired and chose to imitate. In this epistle he is considered as a poet. The name of his mistress is recorded by PROPERTIUS, and CATULLUS: The following lines point out the affliction of CALVUS at her death:

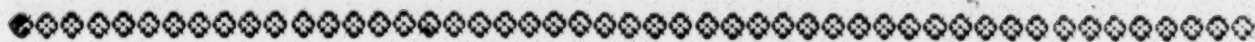
*Si quicquam mutis gratum acceptumve sepulchris
Accidere a nostro, CALVE, dolore potest,
Cum desiderio veteres revocamus amores,
Atque olim amissas flemus amicitias,
Certè, non tanto mors immatura dolori est
QUINCTILIAE, quantum gaudet amore tuoⁱ.*

ⁱ Catul. Carm. xciv.

If silent sepulchres, my CALVUS, know
 Our real sorrows and continued woe,
 When with our tears our friendships we pursue,
 And former loves in spite of death renew;
 QUINCTILIA pleas'd submits to fate's decree,
 Nor mourns her early death, when wept by thee.

The satirical vein of CALVUS is said to have been exerted in the cause of liberty against POMPEY and CÆSAR; the latter of whom was satirized with equal severity by CATULLUS. The behaviour of CÆSAR upon that occasion is much to his honour: He silenced the poet by kindness, and drew him to his friendship by humanity. But his behaviour to CALVUS is unknown.

Legit mihi nuper epistolas, quas uxoris esse dicebat: PLAUTUM vel TERENCE metro solutum legi credidi, &c. "When he read to me the other day some letters, written, as he assured me, by his wife, I could not help thinking, from the delicacy of the stile, and the peculiar turn in the phrases, that they had been composed by PLAUTUS or TERENCE; but supposing them written by his wife, as he affirms, and not by himself, as I suspect, yet his merit is so far from being lessened by her accomplishments, that it is rather heightened by the improvements she appears to have received since their marriage; Improvements, that must have been derived from his tuition." The wife of SATURNINUS was particularly fortunate in such a husband; he was her preceptor, her guide, her lover, and her friend. His precepts were delivered in the fondness of his heart, and his lessons dictated in the warmth and tenderness of affection. He endeavoured to improve her understanding, and to cultivate and bring forward the blooming beauties of her mind. Providence has originally given the same degree of sense and reason to one sex, as to the other: the sun-shine of education must ripen and produce the fruit.



E P I S T L E XVII.

PLINY *to* CORNELIUS TITIANUS.

VIRTUE and acts of friendship are not yet extinct among mankind; there are those who shew themselves friends even to the dead. TITINIUS CAPITO has obtained the request he made to our emperor, that he might be permitted to place in the *forum* a statue of L. SYLLANUS. It is noble and worthy of the highest applause, to make use of the emperor's friendship to such purposes, and to employ our share of the royal favor in gaining honours for other men. It has been the constant practice of CAPITO to revere the most distinguished and brilliant characters of every age: and you would wonder to see with what great exactness, and with what religious respect, he has placed in all the convenient parts of his house the statues of the BRUTI, the CASSII, and the CATTOS; each of whom he has celebrated in an excellent poem containing the chief actions of their lives. You may be certain that he who loves virtue so much in others, abounds with it himself: and by that immortality which CAPITO has given to LUCIUS SYLLANUS, he has secured his own: for it is not less honourable to place the statue of another man in the *Roman forum*, than to have our own erected there. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

All honours bestowed upon the dead, and all marks of tenderness shewn to the memory of deceased friends, are strong instances
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of a most lasting disinterested affection: ^m *In death there is no remembrance, or who shall give thee thanks in the grave?* It is observable from this epistle, that TITINIUS CAPITO did not confine his affections within the narrow limits of his familiar acquaintance, or his immediate relations, but extended his regards to all those, who had in any age distinguished themselves in the cause of liberty, or who had died in the defence of virtue.

TITINIUS CAPITO was much beloved and highly distinguished by the emperor TRAJAN: and we see, by this letter, the honest use he made of so envied and so honourable a situation: he scorned the base arts of a court; he had the reputation of his master solely in view, and entirely at heart: he instilled no groundless doubts, he whispered no pernicious falsehoods, and he insinuated no sordid flattery into his prince's ear: but by the numerous statues in his own house, and those with which he desired to fill the *forum*, he endeavoured to convince his master, that men of integrity and honour are sure to meet with those rewards and that veneration after death, of which the virulence and rage of party too often deprive them in their life-time.—We need enter no farther in this place into the character of TITINIUS CAPITO, because we shall find it drawn by PLINY in the twelfth epistle of the eighth book: but the tragical story of SYLLANUS, (whose statue gave occasion to this letter) ought to be related at full length, with all those circumstances of guilt and horror, which attended the catastrophe.

LUCIUS JUNIUS SYLLANUS was son of the consul APPIUS JUNIUS SYLLANUS, by his first wife ÆMILIA LEPIDA, granddaughter of JULIA, and great granddaughter of AUGUSTUS. The dignity of his birth, and the excellencies of his nature, were so conspicuous, that the emperor CLAUDIUS gave his own daughter OCTAVIA to him in marriage. From this alliance his ruin may be dated. AGRIPPINA, the last, and, if possible, the worst wife of CLAUDIUS, was a woman of a most unbounded ambition, infamously abandoned to all kinds of wickedness, and of a nature so fierce, and cruel, that she felt no pity, and knew no remorse. Upon the death of MESSALINA, she took advantage

of her near affinity to CLAUDIUS, (being his niece) to prey upon his weakness, and to reap the fruits of his governable stupidity: She found him a waxen image, ready moulded to her hands, and she determined from that moment to fix DOMITIUS NERO (her favorite son by a former husband, CNEIUS ÆNOBARBUS) in the imperial throne. She judged that the first step towards such an advancement must be the marriage of NERO to OCTAVIA, the emperor's daughter: it was absolutely necessary therefore to destroy SYLLANUS, the present husband of OCTAVIA; but his life was so unblameable, or, in the words of SHAKESPEARE,

“ He had born his faculty so meek, had been
 “ So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 “ Pleaded like angels, trumpet-tongu'd against
 “ The deep damnation of his taking off.”

Great as his virtues were, the empress was resolved to ruin him; and, as persons in high stations never want fit instruments of evil, L. VITELLIUS, at that time censor, met all her purposes, and embarked in all her designs. He foresaw from the emperor's incapacity, and AGRIPPINA's thirst of dominion, into whose hands the sovereign power must necessarily fall: and since the ruin of SYLLANUS was the first point she aimed at, the politic VITELLIUS was determined to shew her a masterpiece of his art, with a view to ingratiate himself by it into her future favor. He therefore caused SYLLANUS to be accused of incest, with JULIA SILANA his sister: a young lady of great beauty, but whose gaiety of temper, like the unfortunate ANNE BOLEYN's, sometimes carried her into unguarded, though harmless, freedoms with her brother. By this groundless accusation, SYLLANUS fell from the exalted station in which his birth and marriage had placed him, into the utmost misery and disgrace. He was degraded from his senatorial rank, he was deprived of his office of prætor, and he was divorced from his wife OCTAVIA, without the ceremony of a trial, or even the permission of making the least defence. His sister JULIA (daughter-in-law to VITELLIUS himself) was driven out of *Italy*, with all the

brands of infamy: not one of the family, not even MARCUS JULIUS, the brother of SYLLANUS, escaped the furious wrath of AGRIPPINA; but, to confine ourselves more particularly to SYLLANUS and his sister, she was no sooner arrived at the place of her banishment, than she hastened to put an end to her life and her misfortunes.

Free from all thoughts of guilt, all acts of shame,
 She fell a victim to her murder'd fame:
 But if some future bard in tuneful verse,
 Shall her sad story to the world rehearse,
 Each tender breast her virtue must revere,
 And every wife and sister drop a tear.

And now the emperor having gained a decree from the senate, that an uncle might marry a niece, he publicly solemnized his espousals with the sanguinary and relentless AGRIPPINA, daughter of his own brother GERMANICUS. Upon the emperor's wedding-day L. SYLLANUS killed himself. Thus fell the son a sacrifice to the ambitious views of AGRIPPINA, as his father APPIUS had fallen to the libidinous passions of MESSALINA; upon which TACITUS makes a remark to this purpose; "The city of Rome was now differently enslaved from what it had been. It was heretofore a prey to the wanton debaucheries of MESSALINA, but now to the pride and haughtiness of AGRIPPINA, who, though a woman, was resolved to govern with all the tyranny of a man."

When we consider this melancholy part of the Roman history, and look back upon all the particulars mentioned in this epistle of PLINY, it is difficult to determine whether it reflects greater honour upon TRAJAN, in permitting the statue of SYLLANUS to be put up at Rome, or upon TITINIUS CAPITO in placing it there.

* Tacit. Annal. lib. 12. c. 7.

E P I S T L E XVIII.

PLINY *to* TRANQUILLUS.

YOU send me word you have been frightened by a dream, which gives you great uneasiness, as you think it an ill omen in your law-suit. You desire me to ask favor of the court, that it may be put off, and for some few days: it will certainly be difficult to obtain the latter part of your request; however I will try;

“ For dreams descend from Jove.”

But it is worth while to consider whether you are not used to dream by contraries. A dream of mine, which, upon this occasion, occurs to my remembrance, seems to portend extraordinary success, where you most fear a defeat. I was engaged in a cause for JULIUS PASTOR, when I dreamt that my mother-in-law appeared kneeling to me, and entreated me not to plead. I was at that time a very young lawyer, I was to plead in four different courts, and I was engaged not only against the most powerful men in the state, but even against some of the emperor's chief favorites: any one circumstance of which, after such a dismal dream, was enough to startle me from my purpose: but I went on, reasoning in the words of the poet,

“ Without a sign his sword the brave man draws,
“ And asks no omen but his country's cause ^P.”

^o POPE's Homer, Iliad I. v. 85.

^P POPE's Homer, Iliad 12. v. 283.

My

My country, and, if aught could be dearer than my country, the trust reposed in me, urged me on. But I succeeded to the full extent of my wishes, and, from the pleading of that day, I have attracted the attention of the people, and opened to myself the gates of fame. You will consider from hence, whether you may not look upon your dream, rather as a good than an evil omen. But if you are resolved to proceed according to the old cautious maxim, "Never to do any thing with a doubting heart," tell me so, and I will find out some turn or other, that your cause may not be brought on but when you please. For my situation was very different from yours. The court of centumvirs must necessarily sit; but the court, where your cause is to be tried, may be adjourned, though not without difficulty. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

It is no wonder that a man, who has a law-suit upon his hands, should be molested by evil omens, and haunted by frightful dreams; the uncertainties and fears, which encumber a mind thus situated, must summon up numerous vapours, and various chimæras, that in a more calm and less anxious state, could never arise even in a dream: and when we consider the particular character of SÆTONIUS, to whom this epistle is written, we shall be the less surprised to find him alarmed by ghosts, and terrified by goblins. He is an author who deals much in that kind of superstition, and never suffers one of his twelve emperors to die, without half a dozen prodigies going before him.

PLINY, we find, was not so easily scared by apparitions, he paid little or no respect to his mother-in-law, though she appeared kneeling at his feet: he pursued his first design, and exerted himself in a cause before the *centumviri*, in such a manner as greatly increased that growing reputation, of which the observance of his dream must have deprived him.

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One of the most extraordinary dreams, to be met with in any author, may be found in the seventieth chapter of TULLY's second book *De Divinatione*. To that passage the learned reader is referred: and let us conclude all that need be here said upon this particular subject, by inserting these beautiful lines out of MILTON ^q.

Know that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties that serve
Reason as chief; among these fancy next
Her office holds; of all external things
Which the five watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, aerie shapes,
Which reason joining or disjoining frames
All what we affirm, or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
Into her private cell, when nature rests.
Oft in her absence mimic fancy wakes
To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.

The number of *centumviri* was at this time encreased to one hundred and eighty; they were divided by TRAJAN into four different courts or chambers, [*quadruplici judicio*] each consisting of forty five judges. They were magistrates chosen to decide the law-suits that might arise among the people: their judgments were called *centumviralia judicia*, and they were the last and highest court of justice, to which there was any appeal.

^q Par. Lost, Book 5. v. 100.

EPISTLE XIX.

PLINY to ROMANUS FIRMUS.

THE same town gave us birth, the same school bred us up, and the same chamber held us in the earliest dawnings of our life. Your father had a strict friendship for my mother, for my uncle PLINY, and even for me, as far as the difference of our years would permit. These are great and just reasons, why your promotion ought to be next my heart. By your being already *decursion*, it plainly appears that your present fortune amounts to an hundred thousand sesterces¹: but we must not let you stop there; we must also enjoy the pleasure of seeing you a Roman knight; and therefore I send you three hundred thousand sesterces², that you may be immediately qualified for that order: The long continuance of our friendship answers and prevents your acknowledgments on this occasion. If I did not know you, I would remind you of what I am sure you will do without any hint: You will be as little elated with your new dignity as possible, and will consider that a character is to be kept up with the nicest circumspection, when a man is to reflect reputation and honour upon those friends who promoted him. Farewell.

¹ *Centum millium censum*: one hundred thousand *nummi* or *census* amount to one hundred sesterces, equal to 807 l. 5s. 10d. ² *Trecenta millia nummum*: three hundred thousand *nummi* amount to three hundred sesterces, equal to 2421 l. 17s. 6d.

OBSERVATIONS.

In this letter, methinks PLINY seems to have fulfilled that wise and generous precept of SOLOMON to his son, *'thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not.* As it is very certain that the human soul is not capable of any greater perfection, or any nearer approach to the divine attributes, than in acts of friendship; so is it full as certain, that in friendship itself there can be no stronger instance of sincerity, no plainer proof of affection, than where a man parts voluntarily and unasked, as in this epistle, with a large sum of money, to supply the wants, or to raise the fortune of his friend. Riches of the mind are frequently bestowed, with great generosity and profusion, on those companions, whom we hold nearest our heart: our choicest thoughts are brought forth and laid before them, with a liberality that requires no other kind of restitution, than a small return of acquiescence or applause; but the stores of fortune are not so easily parted with; they are not so indiscreetly given away; or, if they are produced, if they are lent, it is not only with caution and consideration, but with an attendance of bonds, judgments, interest, and securities, that discover very different motives from friendship. Without entering into the causes, from whence this narrowness of heart may arise, it is certain, that where two persons desire to keep up a long and uninterrupted commerce of good-will and affection towards each other, no dealings should pass between them, relating to money. Those numerous authors, who have writ essays upon friendship, have scarce ever, or at least but slightly, touched upon that leading branch of it, pointed out in this epistle; being convinced, that where money was concerned, friendship could not be able long to subsist: otherwise why should TULLY and Lord BACON be so silent upon the occasion?

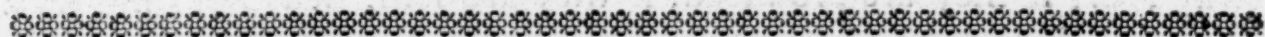
We may easily be persuaded, that ROMANUS FIRMUS, bred up and educated with PLINY, was every way qualified for the rank mentioned in this letter. Knighthood was the immediate step to the senatorial dignity. The Romans had a *census*, or survey of the people, established amongst their laws, by which no person could be

† Proverbs xxvii. 10.

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elected

electd a knight, unless he could prove himself worth so much real wealth: and, we know, by the laws of *England*, it is impossible, some few cases excepted, that any candidate should be elected into parliament, who is not in possession of three hundred pounds a year; and yet there is no instance among us, where an estate, amounting to that income, has been *absolutely* and *irrevocably* given away to a friend, to qualify and entitle him to a seat in the House of Commons. From hence an ill-natured English critic would be apt to say, that the *trecenta millia nummum* was a sum only *lent*, not *given*, by PLINY to ROMANUS, and that this generous act was *revoked* as soon as ever FIRMUS had *obtained the dignity of knighthood*. But we have already seen such a bounteous disposition in our author, and shall, in the course of these epistles, meet with so many instances of generosity, flowing from the inexhaustible springs of his natural benevolence, that, whatever may have been the practice among other men, PLINY can never be suspected of so base an evasion.



EPISTLE XX.

PLINY to CORNELIUS TACITUS.

THERE is a friend of mine, a man of knowledge and erudition, with whom I have frequently a dispute, concerning a certain brevity, which he thinks the chief excellence in pleading causes. I confess this qualification ought to be preserved, where the nature of the cause will permit, and where the merits of it can be brought into little room: But otherwise it is a downright fraud upon the client, either to omit any necessary matter, or lightly and cursorily to run over those circumstances, which ought to be repeated, inculcated and imprinted. For in
most

most causes, the larger scope you take, the greater weight and force will attend your pleadings: and as the continuance of the blow contributes equally with its quickness, in making deep wounds on the body, exactly thus is it with impressions made upon the mind.

This opinion my friend attacks with authorities from the ancients. Among the *Grecians*, he urges the orations of *LYSIAS*: among our own countrymen, those of the *GRACCHI* and *CATO*; many of which are short and concise.

On the other hand, I oppose *DEMOSTHENES*, *ÆSCHINES*, *HYPERIDES*, and many others to *LYSIAS*. I oppose *POLLIO*, *CÆSAR*, and *CÆLIUS*, to the *GRACCHI* and *CATO*: but my chief example is *MARCUS CICERO*, whose longest oration is allowed to be the best: and believe me, a good book, like other good things, is the better in proportion as it is larger. You perceive, that in statues, sculptures, pictures, and other various representations of men, animals, and trees, if they are valuable, their value encreases with their size: and orations should be measured by the same rule. Besides, bulky volumes make a handsomer appearance, and carry with them a kind of indisputable authority.

My friend, who has a particular art of sliding away insensibly out of reach in a dispute, evades this argument, and every thing else of the kind, by asserting, that those orators I quoted, to support me, did, in truth, make shorter speeches than they have published. I am of another opinion, and can defend it by a great number of examples. Let me single out *TULLY* in defence of *MURÆNA* and *VARENUS*; in both which orations he mentioned several heads of crimes, imputed to his clients, unnoticed in his defence, and to be found only in the titles of those orations. From whence it appears, that he certainly spoke a great deal more than he published. In his defence of *CLUENTIUS*,

he tells us, that, according to the ancient constitution, he went through the whole proceedings without a coadjutor, and, in his speech for CORNELIUS, he affirms he was four days in his pleadings. So that we have no room to doubt, that those orations, which cost so much time in the repetition, extended then much farther, than they now reach, croured as they are into one book; which, although large, could never have contained them, unless he had pruned and lopt off many of the branches.

But extempore pleadings, and studied written orations, are two very different things. Well, I know there are people of this opinion: yet for my part, I am fully convinced, perhaps erroneously, that there is no other real difference between them than this. A pleading may be very good when pronounced, which would not appear a good speech, when committed to paper: but it is impossible, that a speech, which stands the test of writing and reading, should not bear the test of speaking and hearing; for the formed speech is indeed the groundwork and model of the pleading, and therefore in our best orations, such I mean as were never spoken, but only published, we find a thousand extempore figures, which could have no place naturally and properly, but in real pleadings. For example, in that oration against VERRES. *Did you name a workman complete in every art? Who is he? Thanks to your hint, I now recollect him. POLYCLETUS is the man.* Hence it follows, that every pleading must be more or less perfect, in proportion to the likeness it bears to the formed oration, I mean every pleading, to the delivery of which a sufficient time has been allowed: for certainly where an orator is confined within too narrow limits, the judges, not the speaker, are to blame. Our very laws and customs favour my opinion,

nion, which are so far from insisting upon brevity, that they indulge great copiousness, that is great exactness, in pleadings, which is inconsistent with brevity, unless in the shortest and plainest causes. Let me add what experience, that master of undoubted authority, has taught me. I have gone through the several offices of a pleader, a judge, and a counsellor; and I have observed, that some are actuated by one reason, some by another, and that often the minutest circumstances draw on the most important consequences. The judgments of men are different; their inclinations are various. This renders their opinions so very widely distant upon the same cause; or, if they agree, even their agreement is founded on opposite motives. Besides, every one favours his own turn of thought, and embraces that as the strongest reason, which, when given by another, tallies with what he had before determined within himself. You must take care therefore to throw among your hearers a variety of arguments, that every man may catch something, which he looks upon and feels as his own.

REGULUS said to me one day, when we were engaged on the same side, *You fancy, that every single circumstance in a cause must be fully discussed and exhausted: my method is to lay my stress upon the principal point, and by fixing at once on my adversary's throat, I strangle him in a moment.* It is very true, REGULUS always presses that point home, upon which he fixes; but then he is often wrong in his choice. Therefore my answer to him was, *You seize upon the throat, as you imagine, but perhaps at last it proves only the knee, the leg, or the ankle. Now I, who, to say truth, have not skill enough to come at the throat directly, aim at every place, try every part, and leave no stone unturned. I take the same method in pleading, as in agriculture. I not only cultivate my vines, but*
I take

I take care of my shrubs; and not of them only, but of my fields: and as in those fields I do not confine myself to sow one particular sort of finer wheat or corn, but every kind of pulse and grain whatever; so in my speeches I croud in every argument, and strew them as thick as I can, that I may be sure to gather in some successful crop; for seasons are not more uncertain and clouded, nor soils more precarious, than the tempers and determinations of our judges.

I cannot upon this occasion avoid recollecting the encomium upon that finished orator PERICLES, by EUPOLIS the comic poet:

Softest Persuasion sat upon his tongue,
And on his lips engaging sweetness hung;
Yet with a strength, that fix'd upon the mind,
That forc'd its way, and left its sting behind.

But this persuasive eloquence, and this engaging sweetness of PERICLES himself, could never have triumphed thus, either by the brevity or velocity of it, (which are two very different things) or by the help of both together, without the greatest abilities; for it is certain, that, when an audience is to be at once persuaded and delighted, a copiousness of matter, and a proper space of time, are necessary to produce it. For the sting, which ought to remain behind, not only requires a speedy thrust to make it enter, but a continued force, to sink it deep into the minds of the hearers. To this may be added, what another comic poet[†] says of the same PERICLES,

He lighten'd, thunder'd, and confounded Greece.

Here you see his speeches were not lopped short, and

[†] ARISTOPHANES.

, maimed, but diffusive, magnificent, and sublime. He rolled his thunder, he darted his lightning, he disturbed every thing, and *Chaos seemed come again*.

Is there not however in oratory a medium preferable to all extremes? Certainly. But this medium is no less transgressed by too much conciseness, than by too much prolixity; by one who takes too little compass, than by him who takes too large a circle. From hence arises a frequent complaint, that one orator is immoderately redundant, another jejune and feeble. One is said to overshoot the point, another to fall short of it. Both equally wrong: One from too much weakness, the other from too great strength; which last is an error on the best side, proceeding from a superiority of genius, though too uncorrect and unbridled. But when I say this, do not imagine that I approve of that ceaseless bauler *THERSITES* in *HOMER*. No, I rather applaud the character of *ULYSSES* in the same poet:

But when he speaks, what elocution flows!
Soft as the fleeces of descending snows ^v.

Not indeed, but there is another character^x in the same author, that I admire as much as possible:

His words succinct, yet full ^v.——

And yet were I to have my choice, I should prefer that oration, which comes on us, like winter's snow, thick, continued, and in large quantities; in a word, which seems to descend from heaven, and to be poured down from the skies.

^v POPE'S *HOMER*, Il. 3, v. 283.
character of *MENELAUS*.

^x POPE'S *HOMER*, Il. 3, v. 277.

^y The

But

But many people prefer the concise manner of pleading. I allow it; but who are they? Only such, whose indolence leads them into that opinion: and would it not be ridiculous to admit their judgments as decisive, whose nicety proceeds from downright laziness? If their advice must be taken, it is not only better to make short speeches, but to make none at all.

These are my present sentiments, which I shall readily alter, if you disapprove them; but then give me the reasons of your disapprobation, because at the same time that I owe an implicit obedience to your authority, yet, in an affair of this consequence, I would chuse to be convinced rather by argument, than authority. If you think me not in an error, let me know it by a letter as short as you please, however give it under your hand, that I may see my own judgment confirmed by yours. If I am wrong, I insist upon a long letter to convince me of my mistake. Tell me, is it not a kind of bribe, to desire you would give yourself but little trouble, if you agree with me, and a great deal, if you differ from me? Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

The epistle now under consideration is the least agreeable of any yet translated. We see an oration before us, instead of a letter; an oration, which is in itself the strongest argument against that prolixity, for which PLINY contends. He might have said, in a much less compass, more than he has said throughout the whole letter: and therefore REGULUS seems to be in the right, who chuses to throttle a man all at once, rather than break his bones, joint by joint.

To make this epistle as profitable and entertaining as the subject will admit, let us take notice of some persons and passages not unworthy of observation.

Hic

Hic ille mecum auctoritatibus agit, ac mihi ex Græcis orationes LYSIÆ ostentat. “ Among the Grecian authorities, which he “ brings down upon me, he always quotes LYSIAS.” He was the son of CEPHALUS; born at *Syracuse*, but brought early out of *Sicily* by his father, and educated at *Athens*. He was one of the most considerable orators among the Greeks. QUINTILIAN gives him a character to this effect: “ The style of “ LYSIAS is extremely elegant and close: if the perfection of an “ orator is to instruct, no man exceeds him in that art: he goes “ directly to the point, and never strays from the purpose; and if “ we cannot compare him to a great river, at least he may be looked “ upon as a clear fountain.”

We learn from TULLY, who goes beyond QUINTILIAN in his praises of LYSIAS, that he never appeared at the bar. The works he published were numerous and various. He died old, poor, and under the sentence of banishment; an unfortunate catastrophe for so great a man. His ruin was occasioned by the jealousy of the Athenians, who, impatient of his superior genius, drove him out of a colony established by them at *Thurium* in *Italy*; a place he was particularly fond of, having been settled there from the age of fifteen years, and having purchased also in that colony an house, and an estate, with an intention to finish his life in the same place where he had passed so great a part of it.

The examples in history of men who fall a sacrifice to their own abilities, and are sunk down by their own weight, are as innumerable, as they are melancholy. If a short conjecture is allowable on the seeming inequality of their fate, perhaps these punishments are sent by Heaven merely to crush that vanity, and to scourge that ingratitude towards the Creator, which extraordinary endowments are too apt to inspire. The heathens were of this opinion, as appears by the fables of ARACHNE, NIOBE and others: and Christians ought to remember, that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.*——But to return to our epistle.

Vides ut statuas, signa, picturas, hominum denique, multorumque animalium formas, arborum etiam, si modo sint decoræ, nihil magis quam amplitudo commendet: idem orationibus evenit.

" It is in orations as in pictures, statues, and other things of that kind: the largeness of the size encreases the value.

Quin etiam voluminibus ipsis auctoritatem quandam et pulchritudinem adjicit magnitudo.

" A large book looks better than a small one;" or, in other words, " there is a much greater air of authority in a folio than in a duodecimo."

These two assertions are very surprizing, in a person of our author's taste, and can be excused by nothing but a partial fondness for his own opinion. In pictures, and statues, it is the symmetry or proportion that strikes the eye, and pleases the understanding, whether the figures represented be of dwarfs, or giants. And so, in books; it is the matter contained within, not the number of leaves, that stamps value, and gives reputation to the volume. PLINY's argument certainly has little weight in it, and deserves no other answer, than what is contained in that old Greek epigram:

Εἰ τὸ τρέφειν πώγωνα δοκεῖ σοφίαν περιποιεῖν,
Καὶ τράγος εὐπώγων εὐσολὸς ἐς Πλάτῳν.

If length of beard deep knowledge must denote,
Yield, PLATO, yield in wisdom to the goat.

Artificem quemnam? recte admones: POLYCLETUM esse dicebant.

" Questions and answers, says LONGINUS², not only enliven
" and add great strength to a speech, but make it more plausible,
" and give it an air of greater probability; for the passions never
" work more strongly upon the auditors, than when the answers
" seem not to be the effect of premeditation, but to rise naturally
" from the thing treated of. This appears very much in interroga-
" tions, and responses to those interrogations; especially where the
" quickness of the answer demanded will not admit of a studied
" untruth." The sentence quoted out of TULLY is an instance
of this kind of oratory. The question asked is purposely to raise
the expectations of the audience, and to heighten the character of
POLYCLETUS. This POLYCLETUS was a Grecian statuary, born
in *Sicyonia*, a city of *Peloponnesus*. PLINY the elder mentions

² Longinus. Sect. 18.

many famous statues made by him, and particularly one, in which the proportions of the human body were so exactly adjusted, that it was called *the master-piece*. He flourished in the 87th olympiad, above four hundred years before the Christian æra.

Πάντα *denique λίθον κινῶ*. I am afraid the Greek sentences, which are every now and then interspersed (in imitation of TULLY) throughout these epistles, have occasioned some of those criticisms upon our author, which accuse him of affectation, and want of ease in his familiar letters. It is not to be denied, that this mixture of languages is totally inconsistent with that unstudied simplicity, which ought to distinguish the epistolary style.

The life of PERICLES will be found in PLUTARCH; but, as his character is here quoted in some beautiful lines from EUPOLIS and ARISTOPHANES, let us recollect what HORACE says of those comic poets :

*EUPOLIS, atque CRATINUS, ARISTOPHANESQUE poetæ,
Atque alii, quorum comædia prisca virorum est,
Si quis erat dignus describi, quòd malus, aut fur,
Quod mæchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
Famosus, multâ cum libertate notabant.*

By these lines, and by those which follow in this fourth satire of HORACE's first book, the poet observes, with great spirit and excellent raillery, how much greater liberties were taken, in the earliest ages, with the conduct and characters of bad men, than were allowed of in his days. As vice encreased, an abhorrence to hear truth encreased also. The wicked turn aside from reproof, and the vain cannot bear it :

Omnes hi metuunt versus, odere poetas.

A just satirist, as he will always be dreaded by knaves, will be cherished and admired by honest men. Yet the natural tendency of mankind to malice and detraction is such, that every scribler endeavours to gain this character, by throwing filth and calumny on all around him : but satire, in the hands of a fool, bears no more re-

semblance to the delicacy of that art, than the lightning of the play-house bears to the lightning in the skies: we see a faint flash, and we smell a disagreeable stench, and then it vanishes without doing any execution: whereas true satire, like true lightning, wounds every object it aims at, melts the sword, without injuring the scabbard, and reaches the soul, but leaves the body untouched. The ancient Greek comedies always abounded with this kind of poetry: and **QUINTILIAN** says, that, after the works of **HOMER**, which are beyond all degrees of comparison with any other books whatever, the ancient comic poets may be looked upon as the best models, by which an orator can form his style.

EPISTLE XXI.

PLINY to PATERNUS.

I Rely as much upon the delicacy of your eye, as upon your judgment; not because you excel me in skill (do not flatter yourself) but because you equal me in it: and that, you will allow, is saying a great deal. However, jesting aside, I really think the slaves I bought, by your advice, are well-behaved and comely. All that remains to be tried now, is their fidelity, which in slaves is better discovered by the ears, than the eyes. Adieu.

OBSERVATIONS.

This short letter discovers a great intimacy between **PLINY** and **PATERNUS**, to whom it is addressed. **PATERNUS** was afterwards secretary to **MARCUS AURELIUS**, and one of his generals: he remained in great trust and favour with that emperor, during his whole reign, but was put to death by **COMMODUS**,
the

the son of AURELIUS, a prince, ^b *who lived only for the destruction of his subjects, and his own shame.*

The slaves which PLINY bought were, in all probability, Asiatics; for we learn from HORACE, that *Cappadocia* was destitute of money, but abounded in slaves.

Mancipiis locuples eget æris Cappadocum rex ^c.

“ The *Cappadocian* king is rich in slaves,
“ But destitute of money.

And PERSIUS tells us that those slaves were plump and sleek:

*Ne sit præstantior alter
Cappadocas rigidâ pingues plaussisse catastâ* ^d.

How large a family of brawny knaves,
Well-fed and fat as *Cappadocian* slaves ^e.

Mr. DRYDEN, in his note upon these lines, says, that the *Cappadocian* slaves were famous for being lusty, well-favoured, and in good liking; their activity and strength was remarkable, and they were looked upon as preferable to any other slaves in the world. The inhabitants of *Cappadocia* were not only born to slavery, but in love with it; and when the Romans offered to make them a free people, they refused the offer, and chose to hug their chains, and live under the yoke of servitude, rather than enjoy the blessings of liberty.

How strange! how incredible! how amazing! must this servility appear, in a country whose characteristic is liberty!

With native freedom, as with courage blest,
Chains, and each mark of thralldom we detest.
'Tis heaven's high gift, 'tis nature's great decree,
That none be slaves, whom God himself made free.

^b Vid. Lampridius. ^c Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 6. v. 39. ^d Persius, Sat. 6. v. 76.
^e DRYDEN's Persius, Sat. 6. v. 181.

Revere we ought those powers which we entrust,
 But to ourselves be resolutely just ;
 Scorn base corruption, nor like slaves disown
 The laws that fix'd our monarch in his throne :
 For well we know by truth's eternal rules,
 Where slaves are subjects, subjects must be fools.
 Exert but reason, liberty will reign,
 And tyranny exalt her impious head in vain.

EPISTLE XXII.

PLINY *to* CATILIUS SEVERUS.

I Have been kept a long time here in town, and in a very desponding way, occasioned by the tedious and stubborn illness of TITUS ARISTO, whom I particularly love and admire. His prudence, his virtue, and his learning are not to be exceeded ; so that, in my opinion, it is not only one man who is in danger, but all polite literature, and the whole circle of arts and sciences. As he is equally well versed in all acts of the legislature, both public and private, so is he a perfect master of history, and the great examples of antiquity. There is nothing you can wish to learn, which he is not able to teach. He is the treasure from whence I always draw my hidden riches. What sincerity, and authority attend his words ! How proper and becoming are his delays ! For although he sees through every thing in a moment, yet he is ever slow and cautious in his determinations, always doubting upon the reasons urged on both sides, which, with a most piercing judgment, he fails not to trace up to their original fountains, and then gives them their due weight in his decisions.

sions. Add to this the temperance of his diet, and the decency of his dress. When I look into his chamber, and see the furniture there, I behold a picture of the ancient frugality. The greatness of his mind gives an ornament to the whole, as none of his actions proceed from ostentation, but all from purity of conscience. He seeks his reward from the rectitude of his conduct, not from the applause which attends it. In short, few of those men who are called philosophers can be compared to him: he does not indeed follow either the schools, or the porticos^s; neither does he mispend his own time, or the time of other persons, in tedious disputations. His hours are passed in business, or at the bar; he assists some by his pleadings, and more by his advice. But he is equal to the greatest men whatever, in modesty, integrity, and justice, and principally in the fortitude of his mind. It would have surprized you, had you been here, to have seen with what resolution he has born this illness, how he has resisted pain, how he has endured thirst, and with what patience he has lain loaded with clothes, to carry off by perspiration the cruel heat of a burning fever.

The other day he sent for me, and some of his favorite friends, and desired us to enquire of his physicians into the nature of his distemper, that if it was incurable, he might chuse an immediate death; but if only stubborn and tedious, he might stand firm, and struggle with it as he ought: for he thought it not allowable to frustrate the prayers of his wife, the tears of his daughter, and the hopes of his friends (if there were any grounds for those hopes) by putting an

^s The Athenians kept their schools in porticos; so did the Romans: the philosophers disputed there. And it is from these covered galleries, that the Stoicks derived their name: *Στοά* signifying in Greek a portico.

end to his own life. A noble determination! but difficult to keep; for you may observe, that most men hurry with eagerness to the relief which is only to be attained by death: but to weigh each motive with deliberation, and to consider the reasons for and against life, and to live or die according to the strength of those reasons, are all instances of a great mind. The physicians promise us success to our wishes: may God fulfill them, and deliver me from this scene of sorrow. As soon as I am released, I will fly to my *Laurentinum*, to my books, my papers, and my studious retirement. At present my attendance on my friend affords me no leisure, and my anxiety about him no inclination for study. Thus have I sent you all my fears, all my wishes, and all my intentions. In return, tell me how you have disposed of yourself? what you are now doing? and what you will do? But I hope to hear from you in a more cheerful strain than mine. It will be no small relief to my misery, that you live free from all complaint. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

The various accomplishments of TITUS ARISTO, his great skill in the laws, his extensive knowledge in ancient history, the firmness of his mind, the fortitude with which he looked at death, the simplicity of his morals, and the integrity of his heart, are so elegantly, and so pathetically described by PLINY, that to add one word to his character would shew little relish of this incomparable epistle. Nor is there any room for observations on a letter so perspicuous, and so masterly in itself, unless we take notice of the following paragraph.

Et medici quidem secunda nobis pollicentur: superest, ut promissis Deus adnuat. "The physicians promise his recovery; God permit those promises to be fulfilled."

The

so sacred, that it ought not to be violated by any person whatever, least of all by the person who possesses it. Perhaps I was in the wrong to think myself of any consequence, whilst I held that post; but, as I entertained that opinion, I would not be engaged as an advocate during the whole time of my tribuneship. First I thought it extremely dishonorable, that I, to whom all people were to give place and to rise, should be obliged to stand, when every body about me sat. Nor was it a less point of indecorum, that one, who had the power of imposing silence upon whom he pleased, should himself be obliged to silence as soon as the hour-glass was out; or that I, who was never to be interrupted as tribune, should be forced as an advocate to hear reproaches thrown out against me, and be accused of want of spirit if I suffered them, and of insolence if I took proper notice of them. Another reason, that wrought strongly upon me, was this. If the client whose cause I espoused, or his adversary whom I opposed, happened to appeal to me in my tribunitial capacity; must I stop the one, and assist the other? or should I acquiesce, and be quite silent, and thus as it were resign the magistracy, and sink myself at once into a private person? Convinced by these several reasons, I chose rather to be a tribune to all, than an advocate to some few.

But, I must repeat it, your own opinion of the office, and the light in which you view it, ought to be fully known. For a wise man will always make it such as he may be able to support with dignity from the beginning to the end. Farewell.

OBSERVATIONS.

The primitive institution of the *tribuni plebis* has been elsewhere sufficiently described ^k. The tribunitial authority, according to the first creation of that magistracy, was incompatible with the power which the emperors grasped at: it was superior even to the power of the consuls; and, unless suppressed, must have eclipsed the imperial dignity.

SUETONIUS tells us, that JULIUS CÆSAR was so jealous of PONTIUS AQUILA, one of the tribunes of the people, who refused to rise to him, as he passed, in the full glory of a triumph, by the place where the tribunes sat, that he cried out with great emotion, ^l *Repete ergo a me, AQUILA, rempublicam tribunus*: “Come “AQUILA, come, thou mighty tribune, and take the common- “wealth out of my hands.” The same author adds immediately after, *Nec deslitterit per continuos dies quidquam cuiquam nisi sub exceptione polliceri, si tamen per PONTIUM AQUILAM licuerit*. “And “for many days after he made no promises but with this reserve “annexed to them, if PONTIUS AQUILA would give him leave:” an answer that shewed what he aimed at. CÆSAR could not bear any limitation of his authority, and therefore with great art endeavoured to convince the people, that his dictatorial power was not compleat, till the tribunitial power was destroyed; and that even his promises could not be depended upon, because subject to the *Veto* of PONTIUS AQUILA.

AUGUSTUS, the child of fortune, lived to perfect what JULIUS had only designed. The words of TACITUS on this head are these. ^m *Postquam BRUTO et CASSIO cæsis nulla jam publica arma; POMPEIUS apud Siciliam oppressus; exutoque LEPIDO, interfecto ANTONIO, ne Julianis quidem partibus nisi CÆSAR dux reliquus; posito triumviri nomine consulem se ferens, et ad tuendam plebem tribunitio jure contentum*. “When, upon the death of BRUTUS and “CASSIUS, the civil wars were at an end; young POMPEY was over- “thrown in Sicily; LEPIDUS was deprived of all power; ANTO-

^k In the Essay on the life of PLINY.
Annal. Lib. 1. Cap. 2.

^l Suet. Jul. Cæsar. cap. 78.

^m Tacit.

“ NY had fallen by his own sword ; and of all the Julian party not
 “ one was left but their chief, OCTAVIUS CÆSAR ; he by lay-
 “ ing aside the title of triumvir obtained that of consul, and pro-
 “ fessed himself desirous of the tribunitial power, merely to defend
 “ and protect the people.” The use which he made of that power
 is perfectly well known : and because the tribunes ought always to
 be elected out of plebeian families, AUGUSTUS, and the succeeding
 emperors, were not strictly tribunes, but *tribunitiâ potestate induti*.
 The name and shadow of the tribuneship remained ; the substance
 and authority were taken away.

PLINY therefore judges extremely right, in saying to his friend,
*Plurimum refert quid esse tribunatum putes ? Inanem umbram et sine
 honore nomen, an potestatem sacrosanctam ?* “ My answer must de-
 “ pend upon your real opinion of this employment. Do you look
 “ upon it as an empty name ? or do you think it an office of too sa-
 “ cred a nature to be treated with indifference ?” Then our author
 proceeds to relate his own behaviour during his continuance in that of-
 fice ; and herein he discovers great prudence and spirit. He was re-
 solved, we see, to raise this office, as far as he could, towards its
 former dignity. His greatness of mind would not suffer him to go on
 like his predecessors, in debasing an employment, which, by the
 tame submission of the people, and the insatiable ambition of their
 governors, was fallen not only from the first original, but was be-
 come of little or no importance. Had the preceding tribunes act-
 ed in the same resolute manner, the CÆSARS might have been em-
 perors, but never could have been tyrants. And yet the modesty
 of PLINY equals his integrity ; for what can be a plainer instance of
 it, than where he says, speaking of himself in this epistle, *Errave-
 rim fortasse, qui me esse aliquid putavi ?* “ Perhaps I was in the
 “ wrong to think myself of the least consequence ?”

E P I S T L E XXIV.

P L I N Y *to* B E B I U S H I S P A N U S .

MY neighbour TRANQUILLUS has a mind to buy a small piece of land, which a friend of yours, as they tell me, is willing to sell. I must entreat you to take care, that the terms be equal on both sides; for at that rate only can the purchase be agreeable. A bad bargain vexes a man, chiefly because it seems a strong instance of his folly. In this little piece of ground there are several things (if the price is not too high) peculiarly adapted to the inclination of my friend TRANQUILLUS. The small distance from the city, the goodness of the road, the size of the house, and the quantity of land about it, which will prove rather a farm of retreat than of employment: for, as TRANQUILLUS is a studious man, he should only have ground enough to exercise his fancy, and delight his eyes. A private walk, where he can saunter at his ease, from one end to the other, and trample out a path in which he may view every branch of his vines, and number every shrub in his garden. I have told you all these particulars, that you may know how much he will be obliged to me, and how much I shall think myself so to you, if TRANQUILLUS makes this little purchase (attended with so many lucky circumstances) upon such conditions as will leave him no room to repent of it. Adieu.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS.

Here are two great beauties in this epistle: the particular care which PLINY takes, that his friend SÆTONIUS shall not be imposed upon in the purchase of an estate; and the agreeable description he gives of a philosopher's garden. The observation of our author, that a man is more uneasy at the disreputation he suffers, by being over-reached in a bargain, than by the loss he sustains, is extremely just. We can live without glory, but we cannot submit to shame: Those who are really wise would have no instance of their conduct appear to the contrary; and those who are not so, try all methods to appear wiser than they are: and yet it is very certain, there are no people so easily led into disadvantageous contracts as men of a studious and speculative disposition, who pass more time with their books, than with their friends, who converse more with the dead than with the living, and who abstract themselves from the commerce of the world, and from those busy scenes of life, which prepare us against the various artifices of mankind: such men are fitter for the golden than for the iron age.

The End of the FIRST BOOK.



Original. May 7 1746.

